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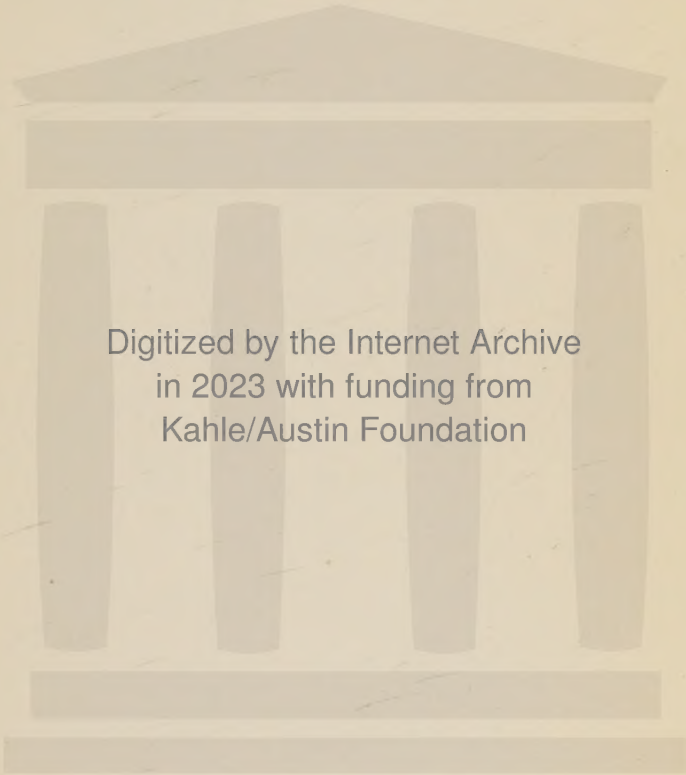
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THE ATTAH OF IDAH

THE PARAMOUNT CHIEF OF THE IGARA TRIBE, A TYPICAL NIGERIAN FETISH-KING. HE IS REGARDED BY THE FAITHFUL AS AN INCARNATION OF THE DEITY, AND HIS CONDUCT HEDGED IN BY NUMEROUS MAGICAL TABOOS.

The
RED MEN *of* NIGERIA

AN ACCOUNT OF A LENGTHY RESIDENCE AMONG THE FULANI, OR "RED MEN," & OTHER PAGAN TRIBES OF CENTRAL NIGERIA, WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THEIR HEADHUNTING, PASTORAL & OTHER CUSTOMS, HABITS & RELIGION

BY

CAPTAIN J. R. WILSON-HAFFENDEN,
F.R.G.S., F.R.A.I.

Sometime Administrative Officer, Nigerian Service;
Late R.F.C., R.A.F. & Intelligence Corps
Imperial Russian Order of Saint Stanislas
Second Class, with Swords

WITH A FOREWORD BY

BRONISLAW MALINOWSKI,
PH.D., D.SC.
Professor of Anthropology in the University of London

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To

H. R. PALMER, Esqre., C.M.G., C.B.E.

Formerly Lieutenant-Governor of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria, now Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of the Gambia

This Book
is
By Permission
Dedicated

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS book is a record of personal experiences and observations in Nigeria, and in particular it contains an instalment of my contribution to the work of the Anthropological Department in that Dependency.

The Department was formed in 1924, and under its auspices I entered London University, when on leave, in January of the following year, as a research student in Anthropology. On my return to Nigeria, as time and occasion allowed, I set to work, at the suggestion of the authorities, to make detailed inquiries into the customs of certain tribes inhabiting the Nasarawa Province, in which I was serving. My studies were confined principally to the "Cow" Fulani and the Kwottos.

The word "Fulani" is derived from a Berber root, "ful" or "pul," and is in origin a nickname meaning "the red men." It has been surmised that the name was given to the people in question by the Berbers as constituting a foreign "red" (or, as we should say, "white" or light or reddish brown) element, in the same way as the Greeks called the Phœnicians "the red men."

The question of the origin of the Fulani has not yet been solved. Certain theories on the subject are referred to in this book. They are found scattered all over West Africa to about 20° N. latitude, but the area in which they have become most powerful is that between the 8th and 14th parallels of latitude and the 4th and 13th meridians of longitude, or, roughly, the territory known to-day as the Northern Provinces of Nigeria.

The Kwottos are a tribe of Jukun affinity, whose ancestors split off from the parent Jukun stock about two hundred years ago. The Hausa name for the Jukuns is K(w)ororafa (plural, K(w)ororafawa), which means the "K(w)oros" or "white men" of Afa or Apa, a former Jukun stronghold in the Benue Valley, and the capital of an empire known by that name. This nickname "K(w)oro," it is supposed, was originally given to the Jukuns, like the appellation "the red men" to the Fulani, as forming a foreign Hamitic or other non-negro element, which has since become to some extent obliterated by negro admixture.

For various reasons I did not find an opportunity to put together more than a small proportion of the notes I made concerning the traditions and customs of these "red men" and "white men" before leaving Nigeria. Those which I submitted to Government concerning the Fulani were approved by the authorities for publication in their original official-note form in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* in 1927; while those concerning the Kwottos appeared in

the *Journal of the African Society* in 1927 and 1928. I have to express my best thanks to the councils of both these institutions for the permission given to include in this book the substance of certain portions of those notes.

I have to acknowledge the debt I owe to Mr H. R. Palmer, C.M.G., C.B.E., formerly Lieutenant-Governor of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria (now Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Gambia), under whom I first had the honour to serve in Bornu, for his interest in my inquiries and official encouragement.

To Professor Seligman, F.R.S., and the London School of Anthropology, whose pupil I have had the honour to have been, as also to Mrs Seligman, I am indebted for their interest and assistance. To Professor Malinowski I am especially grateful for reading through the proofs of the book and writing an Introduction.

I am most grateful to certain of my colleagues, still serving, who desire to remain anonymous, and to Mr A. W. Hook, late of the Nigerian Political Service, for permission to use some of their photographs to supplement my own.

Last, but not least, I have to acknowledge the debt I owe to my numerous African friends, who have honoured me with their confidence and who have been the means of my learning about such of their customs as I have described. Two deserve special mention—Dawaji, now deceased, an elder belonging to the Shuwalbe clan of the Cow Fulani, and Adeni, a Kwotto aristocrat, of Toto.

References to a number of authorities on Nigerian and West African ethnology, and on anthropology in general, whose works I have consulted, will be found in the notes appended to certain of the chapters.

With regard to tribal names, I have used the commonest anglicised versions of these throughout to avoid confusion. Thus I have written "a Hausa" (plural, "Hausa" or "Hausas") instead of the more strictly correct vernacular forms, "Bahaushe" (plural, "Hausawa"), the significance of which would not readily be understood by anyone unacquainted with the Hausa language.

For a similar reason I have purposely used anglicised instead of vernacular plurals of common vernacular words, such as *dogaris* (native policemen), *alkalis* (Mohammedan judges), and so on.

In conclusion of this Foreword I would like to recommend attention to some remarks made by Mr Jan Hofmeyr, bearing on the need for ethnological research in Africa at the present day, contained in the opening address to the Annual Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, held recently in South Africa. In the course of his answer to the question he propounded: "What can science give to Africa?" Mr Hofmeyr referred to the practical value of anthropological study in these words. He said: "The way to the solution of the problems presented by African barbarism is to be

sought in an understanding of the character and mentality of primitive peoples, in the exploration of those regions in their social life where are to be found the factors that determine their reaction to diverse methods of administration. The study of African languages and of African anthropology is therefore fundamental to the development of the continent."

J. R. Wilson-Haffenden.

Junior Army and Navy Club, S.W.1.
1930.

FOREWORD

NIGERIA is undoubtedly one of the most fascinating countries in the world. It is the largest Crown Colony in Africa. It is, after India, the most populous British possession outside Europe. It has only recently been reclaimed from independent African rule, and is still almost blood-stained with the savagery of head-hunting, human sacrifices and native wars, though happily not of punitive expeditions. But the main reason why the student, the politician and the average citizen should be really interested in this country is that the colony of Nigeria is the most interesting political experiment in Africa, being administered by the so-called indirect or dependent rule.

All these elements of interest make the present book by Captain Wilson-Haffenden a very important contribution to African colonial literature. In its early chapters the author gives us a vivid description of the interesting but arduous task awaiting the young Government official in Nigeria. We are told of his first impressions; of his gradual adaptation to his difficult duties, and of the complicated control of indigenous administration which indirect rule entails. The supervision of railway and road construction, the control of native labour, the solution of judicial and administrative difficulties constitute no mean burden on a young colonial official. And all the time he has actively to take part in the conflict between the onslaught of rapidly encroaching progress and the resistances of a venerable yet antiquated tradition.

This clash of Western culture with the older civilisations of mankind is the greatest drama that history has ever chronicled, a process of ruthless levelling which is going on in most parts of the world nowadays—in Russia as well as in the heart of Africa, in India and in China, in the South American jungle, and in the islands of the Pacific. The two principal characters of the play, the Native and the White, are both struggling against unknown forces, dragged by unforeseen destinies, groping in the dark of an entirely alien outlook. Looking at it from the point of view of the white administrator who should control and guide the progress of his native charges, we see him faced by a whole set of unfamiliar conditions: he deals with an alien race; he manipulates the laws and customs of an unknown civilisation; he has to deal with a mentality, backward, puzzling and uncontrolled at the same time.

He should have been fully trained in the knowledge of native custom, mentality and social organisation, yet up till quite recently no effort whatever had been made to provide him with such training. The depopulation of vast areas, the discontent of native communities, the formation of coloured Bolshevism and of the "poor white" problem have been the results of some of the haphazard and ill-instructed

moves in Colonial policy, which have so often taken the place of real statesmanship and expert knowledge.

A remarkable change, however, has come at last into the spirit as well as into the technique of European dealings with subject races, and West Africa, and above all Nigeria, is leading the way in this matter. Right through Africa it has become more and more clear that direct tutelage of the native, the forcing of him into European institutions, and his development on pseudo-European lines have led to well-nigh insoluble difficulties. On the other hand, such earlier experiments as the partial autonomy left to the various native states and communities of Uganda have shown that the more independence and initiative you leave to the native in the management of his local and tribal affairs the more contented, prosperous and loyal he becomes. The destruction of native customs, institutions and ideas on a vast scale has been almost completely abandoned in several African colonies. In the East, Uganda and the Mandated Territory of Tanganyika show how infinitely better is the system of indirect or dependent rule than the most questionable system of Kenya. But this system of autonomy is rightly called the West African system, because its fullest application was made in Nigeria, above all in its Northern Provinces. In Nigeria the native has been left alone as far as possible and controlled only where it was absolutely necessary. The position of the hereditary leaders of the various tribes and states as guardians of law and tradition has been recognised and upheld. Within constitutional limits they are allowed to frame new laws and modify custom. The British authorities suppress or change traditional practices of the indigenous population only when this proves inevitable. Indirect rule also entails the principle that the African must not be forcibly made into a caricature of the white man, but must be allowed to develop on genuinely African lines. These principles, first laid down by Lord Lugard and embodied in his administrative work of construction and creation of new colonies, have also been carried out by such outstanding men as (the late) Sir Gordon Guggisberg, Sir Hugh Clifford, Sir Donald Cameron—to mention a few names only.

Yet it is clear that indirect rule and the development of the African on African lines, though it is the only way out of the chaos, is not by any means an easy way. It entails a theoretical task of the first magnitude, besides the many practical difficulties with which it is surrounded. For we must learn to know what "African lines" really are, and we must also define the type of development, its end and its means of realisation. All this means that the study of native cultures and social organisation, of laws and customs, of ideas and beliefs, must be an integral task of modern colonial administration. This point has been clearly recognised in Nigeria, where Mr H. R. Palmer, until recently the Lieutenant-Governor of the Northern Provinces (now

Governor of the Gambia), has not only encouraged anthropological work among his subordinates, but has become a first-rate anthropologist himself.

The difficulty lies, however, not only with the administrative side, which has so admirably responded to the call. The anthropologist also will have to adapt his outlook to his new task, and in fact completely remould his aims and methods. He will have to study the changing African of to-day, and not merely hark back to the " unspoiled savage " of several generations ago. He will have to investigate the diffusion of cultures in its new dramatic manifestations, which goes on under our very eyes, rather than day-dream about one or other of the hypothetical diffusions of several thousand years ago. He will have, above all, to stop dabbling in little curiosities and turn to such fundamental aspects of tribal life as land tenure, legal systems, native administrative and financial methods, and the various sociological, religious and intellectual problems which directly arise out of administrative difficulties. In doing that, the anthropologist will not become subservient to mere utilitarian claims. He will improve his theory as well as enhance his utility. This point of view I have elaborated in an article on " Practical Anthropology " (*Africa*, January 1929), so I need not dwell on it here.

Captain Wilson-Haffenden is fully alive to these modern developments in anthropology. He declares himself a staunch supporter of the Functional School, and incidentally makes me responsible for the creation, or at least leadership, of the school in Great Britain, following in this Professor Radcliffe-Brown's nomination (see p. 192 of the present book). I think that I am really responsible for the label " functional " which is now generally attached to our school or tendency. But the principles themselves, and the method, are as old as empirical and comparative anthropology, and they are best represented in some of the work of the previous generation of anthropologists—in the writings of Westermarck and E. B. Tylor, of Grosse and Durkheim. The modern functional method was born in field work and developed by it. For the field-worker who does not pay only a flying visit to his tribe but remains with it till he begins to speak the language well, and to understand the fundamentals of the culture, soon comes to recognise that culture, as a whole, and all its constituent elements are constantly at work. He sees the weapons and implements being used in various ways; he sees that customs and usages subserve each a definite purpose; that ideas and beliefs are enacted in ritual, followed in morality, obeyed in customary and legal practices. He sees, in short, that all those elements anthropologists are apt to regard as detached curiosities to be explained by history or " evolution " or " survival " are to the native something really effective; that they are useful instruments, powerful incentives to action; that they supply the motive force of action and the integrating sentiments on which society is founded.

He perceives, also, that culture is a reality *sui generis*, which is submitted to laws of universal validity; that magic, for instance, differ as it may in various parts of the world, yet consists of the same elements —spell, rite and condition of the performer; that it is associated with a typical belief in an impersonal force; that it controls, in a remarkably uniform way, economic activities, love and hatred, war and inter-tribal enterprises.

Sorcery, which at first blush appears but an evil, malignant force, is found, on deeper study, to be strongly influenced by moral considerations. Captain Wilson-Haffenden has found in Nigeria the same state of affairs which I was able to discover at the other end of the world—in New Guinea: evil magic is used almost invariably in the execution of legally or morally valid grievances; it is a conservative force which goes with political power and established right, and it is hardly ever used, if at all, in this purely malicious, haphazard way, which was regarded up till now as its universal characteristic. If the present author and I are correct in our independent conclusions, it becomes obvious that the Government officials ought to approach any legislative abolition of sorcery with far greater caution than has been done hitherto.

Another good example of how important the understanding of native customs in their functional aspect can be for the administrator can be drawn in this book from the interesting chapters on Headhunting, Human Sacrifice and War Shrines, and Trial by Ordeal. Here we are faced with customs which for various reasons the European administration cannot preserve. After all, we have to consider the superstitions and idolatries of the white man as well as those of the native. We get up in arms when a West African sacrifices a victim every seven years on the shrine of his fetish, though we do not mind sacrificing some twenty million lives to our fetish of national honour, flag and sovereignty of the State. However this might be, headhunting, cannibalism and the burning of witches are being rigorously suppressed now among black savages with a great deal of self-righteousness on the part of the white man, who often forgets that one of these customs at least has been practised with the same self-righteousness in England and the United States some hundreds of years ago. But Captain Wilson-Haffenden's sympathetic study shows that these customs do fulfil a function among his Nigerians. Their suppression leaves a system of social and individual needs unsatisfied—it leaves a gap. A wise Administration will consider whether such gaps should be filled and how this should be done—above all, how the suppressing should be carried out to inflict a minimum of harm. Many serious students of anthropology, notably Captain Pitt-Rivers, in his recent book on the *Clash of Culture and the Contact of Races*, have shown that depopulation is very largely due to the absence of real interest in life, consequent on the suppression of cruel but virile sports and strongly stimulating enterprises. No definite

judgment can be formed on this complex problem, but we need more attention given to it, not merely from armchair anthropologists or from the untutored "practical man," but from administrators fully trained in anthropological methods of observation and in anthropological thinking.

Where, however, the most important effect of functional interest can be seen in this book is in the thorough-going consideration given to family, marriage, inheritance and kinship. These matters could be placed in the right perspective, as Captain Wilson-Haffenden has succeeded in doing, only by an anthropologist fully acquainted with the methods of functional analysis. The interesting account which we receive of native views of procreation and pregnancy, and of the manner in which these views affect native kinship and legal ideas, shows how important it is to study beliefs and social organisation side by side. Another very important correlation is that between free sexual life and the quality of marriage. Captain Wilson-Haffenden's researches seem to suggest, though perhaps we would like to have a fuller documentation of his statement, that the liberty of pre-nuptial intercourse to be found among the nomadic Fulani and the Kwottos *de facto* leads to the formation of more stable and satisfactory marriages, since they are based on thorough and wide experience. Now this is exactly what I myself have found in an entirely different part of the world, and what has been affirmed from several other ethnographic areas by dependable observers. It seems again that here we have to do with an important law of correlation—a law which defines the function of pre-nuptial licence in direct reference to marriage.

The real value of the functional attitude is demonstrated by the present book, for this attitude or method has driven Captain Wilson-Haffenden throughout, not to an idle speculation as to what the origins of customs might be, but to further and further investigations of what an institution or a belief actually signifies to the native, how it is placed within its cultural context, what services it renders to the community as a whole. Some of the explanations no doubt will have to be re-examined, and may perhaps prove inadequate, but on the whole they aim in the right direction.

The functional point of view has led Captain Wilson-Haffenden to give us a vivid, convincing and organically connected picture of a most interesting native community. It is to be hoped that he will be able to continue his researches in Nigeria, and that these will stimulate other administrative officers to emulate him in his excellent contribution.

B. Malinowski.

Department of Anthropology,
University of London.

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THE RED MEN OF NIGERIA

CHAPTER ONE

Nigeria

"NIGERIA," the late Lady Lugard wrote, in 1905, "is not properly a name. It cannot be found on a map that is ten years old. It is only an English expression which has been made to comprehend a number of native states. . . ."

To-day it is not necessary to preface an account of experiences and observations in those states with a reference to their geographical location. Yet it may not be amiss, for the purpose of refreshing the memory, to make a few preliminary remarks concerning their history and present condition before commencing my narrative.

The name Nigeria is officially applied to-day to that territory which comprises all the states under British protection between the Western Sudan and the Bight of Benin. It is the largest of the British West African possessions, its approximate area, including the Mandated Area of the Cameroons, being 363,625 square miles, or more than three times that of the United Kingdom. It has a population of nearly nineteen millions, which is, roughly, equivalent to that of the dominions of Canada, South Africa and Australia combined, or half the total number of inhabitants of England and Wales.

The territory is now divided into three main portions —the colony of Nigeria, comprising Lagos and its environs, and two groups of provinces known as the Northern and Southern Provinces of Nigeria. Of these three the Northern Provinces is by far the largest division, although portions of the others, such as Benin, the "City of Blood," and Lagos, the former centre of the slave trade, are perhaps better known on account of their notorious past.

The modern political history of the Northern Provinces, with which area this narrative is primarily concerned, is largely the story of the gradual rise and subsequent deterioration of local Muslim rule. The inhabitants of the more northern states were the inheritors of an ancient civilisation, based on the religion of Islam, which flourished more especially among the Fulani of Sokoto in the north-west and the Kanembu people in the region of Lake Chad. In the early years of the nineteenth century the Fulani experienced a great religious revival under the leadership of Uthman dan Fodio and a holy war was declared against the surrounding pagan tribes. From their centre in Sokoto the Fulani spread out in all directions. Kano and Zaria were among the principal towns taken, Keffi and others in the Benue area falling later. For a time, under the leadership of Uthman and his son Bello, the government remained in the hands of enlightened rulers. The administration was entrusted to a responsible executive, while the courts were controlled by judges deeply read in Mohammedan law. But by the close of the century the country had fallen into a state of confusion and anarchy, in some respects

not unlike the condition of England in the days of King Stephen.

The Fulani emirs, although nominally still recognising the headship of the Sultan of Sokoto, had in practice become a law unto themselves. They, like the English barons in the twelfth century, had secured themselves in walled fortresses, which they defended against all who might attempt to subdue them. They greatly oppressed the wretched peasantry, whom they forced to work at their mud palaces and ramparts. They confiscated the property of merchants and traders, as also the belongings of rich men on their death. Preferment was by purchase, and bribery flourished in the courts. They were continually levying exactions on the villages, and when the miserable inhabitants had no more to give they plundered and burned their dwellings, and seized both men and women as slaves. So that at length a man might walk for many days over fertile country, previously densely populated, without finding either habitations or tilled lands.

In similar circumstances history often repeats itself. As Henry II. in 1155 had been forced to subdue his unruly subjects by force of arms, so in 1900 did the British Crown, which already occupied lands adjacent to the scene of these disorders, find it necessary to break the despotic power of the Muslim emirs by military means, and insist on the restoration of law and order in their dominions. The emirs of Kontagora, Yola, Bauchi, Bornu, Kano and Sokoto were subdued in turn, and, in addition, numerous expeditions against truculent pagan tribes were undertaken.

The system of administration which has been called

"Indirect Rule through the Native Chiefs" was then set up, a system based on the consideration that the native chiefs were not fit for independent rule, but that, under the guidance of Administrative Officers, whose policy was co-ordinated from Headquarters, they could be trained to control a reformed native executive and judiciary. In lieu of previous haphazard sources of revenue, the emirs and their principal executive and departmental officers were gradually provided with fixed salaries and their former irregular imposts prohibited. Taxation was regularised, Imperial currency—destined to become the sole medium for the payment of tribute and fines—was introduced in replacement of the former tokens, such as cowries, salt, or iron bars. Native treasuries were set up, and the methods of accounting for public revenue and expenditure were put on a satisfactory basis. The *Alkalis'* (Mohammedan judges) Courts were freed from undue interference from the executive, and in pagan areas courts composed of local elders of influence were established.

But in these latter regions the chiefs had less education, and sometimes less influence over their people, than in the Mohammedan districts. It was, therefore, impracticable in such areas immediately to set up in its entirety such a complicated system of decontrol. But the principles underlying the system were made to apply to all alike, in the more backward districts the Administrative Officer having, as a matter of course, to assume the major portion of the responsibility during the period of the elementary education of the native rulers.

This system was not the same as that which obtained,

at the time of its inception, in the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, where a system of administration which has been called "Direct Rule" was in force. A form of direct rule remained the official native policy in Southern Nigeria until 1914. In that year, on the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Nigeria Protectorates, the system of "Indirect Rule," which had proved such a success in the north, was extended to the united territory.

As is well known, much controversy has raged, and indeed still rages, in different parts of the Empire concerning the merits and demerits of these alternative systems of administration designed to deal with the Colour Problem; but the discussion of such matters is outside the scope of this book. Controversy respecting them is, of course, acutest where the problem itself assumes the largest proportions, as in East and South Africa, British India, and the Indian Native States. But it can hardly be said to be acute in Nigeria, for she has as yet scarcely begun to experience any widespread clash of colour. This is chiefly due to the country being unsuitable for white settlement, for, in the words of a recent edition of the *Nigeria Handbook*, "except perhaps on the Plateau the Nigerian climate is not a healthy one for Europeans, and Nigeria shares with the rest of West Africa an unenviable reputation in this respect."

Chastened by this somewhat unenthusiastic official description of the country, I ascended the gangway of the s.s. *Adda* at Liverpool in a state of optimistic uncertainty as to what might await me at the end of the fifteen days' voyage.

The atmosphere on board a West African liner is

peculiar. Many of the passengers are sure to be "Old Coasters," while the majority will at least have visited the coast before. And so, the climate and its effect being the common experience of all, except the few newcomers, it forms a fertile subject of conversation throughout the voyage.

Melancholy and tragic are many of the tales which are told, those with the happy ending being all too rare. Details of the casualties from blackwater fever and sleeping sickness; "how poor So-and-so broke up and was invalided out of the service a week before his pension was due"; how many of those who survived the train journey from the interior to the coast subsequently succumbed to the sudden chill of the trade-winds between Sierra Leone and the Canaries, and were there buried at sea, in the interval lugubriously known as "The Graveyard"—these are the items of news constantly swopped over drinks. So that the new hand, by the time he reaches his destination, is prepared for the worst. But, fortunately, in the great majority of cases, the reality proves throughout better than the anticipation; unless, indeed, as occasionally happens, the individual, after years of practical immunity from disease, suddenly breaks up, and within a few days joins the ranks of the retired or the departed.

As an alternative to discussing the dead, stories are told of the living. Some of the best known concern "Old Stagers" who, having lived a long time on the coast under the hectic conditions of the "old days," developed various idiosyncrasies.

There was a prototype of Sanders of the River, whom readers of Edgar Wallace will no doubt recognise,

reputed to be regarded—like Nicholson Sahib in India —as the tutelary deity of a certain lawless tribe. Like his Indian counterpart he tried in vain to disillusion his unwanted disciples. But the more he punished the tribesmen the more powerful they considered him to be. And to this day it is said that to the question, "What is the name of your god?" asked of a member of this tribe, the name of this official will be given in reply.

Then there was a certain senior official who was so fond of romancing that he acquired the nickname of "George Washington." A book could be filled with the stories which circulate, attributed to this individual, concerning his marvellous exploits and charmed life, of his education in Germany and the duels he had fought there, of his thrilling escapes from the European police, and the sundry murders he had, according to his own account, been driven to commit, of how he had deputised for Caruso in Rome at the express request of the Queen of Italy, and so on.

Another story has reference to an officer of the W.A.F.F. (West African Frontier Force — now honoured by the prefix "Royal"). He had gone out on patrol. One day his "boy" appeared before the Commissioner of the District and announced: "My master has come, sir." The District Officer replied: "All right. Ask him to come in." The boy hesitated; then ventured: "He can't, sir." "Why not?" the D.O. asked. "*Shi ne chikin akwatinsa, Bature*" ("He is in his coffin, sir"), came the faltering response.

Such are some of the tales told by Old Coasters. Now that the ladies are starting to come out to the coast

in larger numbers, the steamer lounge, with its chatty, catty tea-parties, is also becoming a typical West African institution. But such palavers or *maganas*, as occasions of human intercourse of almost any kind are locally called, do not provide the only relaxations. The voyage has other and more æsthetic interests to those new to the tropics.

By day the settled magnificence of the blazing sun, the azure brightness of the cloudless sky, the sparkling indigo of Southern waters — playground of gaily-coloured flying-fish and dolphins — and the low tree-clad Guinea Coast shimmering in the haze, now pink, now grey, with here and there a stretch of golden sand or silvery beach, and now and then immense surf-breakers, wreathed in glistening spray; by night the glamour and clear brilliance of the tropical moon, the beauty of the Southern Cross and the phosphorescent wonder of rippling waters combine to make the voyage memorable as a first experience.

Dawn on the last day of the journey finds the liner approaching the Lagos river bar, which until a few years ago was a dangerous obstruction and effectually prevented large ships from entering the Lagos lagoon. Now, however, the mail steamers are able to enter with the assistance of a pilot tug. This comes out to meet the boat soon after dawn, and escorts her a couple of miles up a winding course, flanked by a low coast broken by several creeks, until the "pestilential Island of Lagos," as Burton called it, is reached. Barely sixty years ago the centre of the slave trade in the Bight of Benin, one finds it to be a flourishing modern port, furnished with up-to-date wharves, connected with the

mainland and with the adjacent island of Iddo by two fine bridges, complete with canal, electric light, telephones and wireless, and—crowning boon—(until 1928) enjoying complete immunity from income-tax — a veritable John Citizen's paradise!

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CHAPTER TWO

From Lagos to Bornu

ON arrival at Lagos I was met by an official from the Central Secretariat. He confirmed the advance copy of my travelling orders, received *en route* by cable at Sekondi, to the effect that I was to proceed to Bornu for duty. I was to entrain at Iddo station, situated on an island in the Lagos lagoon, thence to proceed to railhead at Kano, seven hundred miles up country from Lagos. There I would be supplied with carriers with which to complete, by such means of personal transport as I might devise, the remainder of the journey of three hundred odd miles to Maiduguri, the Headquarters of the Bornu Province, seventy miles from Lake Chad.

After crossing the Iddo straits—or, as the journey is now made, after leaving the recently constructed wharf at Apapa — the Northern Nigerian boat-train passes through the narrow coastal belt of mangrove swamp and enters the rain and deciduous forests of the Southern Provinces. Thence it penetrates the zone of savannah jungle, to which the greater part of the Northern Provinces belongs, until finally, at the northern terminus, it reaches the edge of the thorn forest and desert, marking the southern limit of the Sahara.

Three hundred and three miles from Lagos the River Niger at Jebba is crossed by means of two fine bridges. These were finally completed in 1916 at a

considerable cost in human life, chiefly occasioned by sickness contracted in that malarious spot. The arches span the river close to the so-called "Juju Rock." This is an immense crag, the spirits associated with which were believed by the natives at the time to be actively working against the Europeans thus rashly attempting to overcome the mighty Niger, up to that time deemed unconquerable.

In the afternoon of the second day after leaving Lagos, after a journey of forty-two hours, the train approaches its goal, the walled city of Kano, once considered an impregnable fortress and for centuries, as indeed it is to-day, the commercial capital of Hausaland. Its huge, loopholed mud walls, fifteen miles in circumference, forty feet high, approximately eighty feet wide at the base, with inside terrace wide enough for several soldiers to march round abreast, contain thirteen massive gates, and are surrounded by two deep ditches. These immense ramparts, rising abruptly from the plain under the shadow of the twin hills of Kazauri and Dalla, form an impressive and novel finale to this stage of the journey.

Accommodation for travellers at Kano was limited. There are no hotels in the Protectorate of Nigeria. The alternatives were, occupying one of the station rest-houses—circular, mud-walled, thatch-roofed structures, unfurnished—or of doubling up as the guest of a fellow-official. There were more than sufficient passengers to fill all available rest-house accommodation, and I was invited to stop as the guest of an A.D.O. in his bungalow until I had completed preparations for my trek into the "bush." The bungalow was

a substantial, cement-walled, tin-roofed building of the usual oblong type, partitioned into rooms, provided with a wide open verandah on two sides, and supplied with a complete set of Government furniture.

The next problem was the acquisition of "boys." Of these I had up to that time collected one, who proposed to do duty as a "steward" (West African for a valet who also "butles"). He had been selected for me by a fellow-passenger, an "old hand," out of a mob of gesticulating natives, all clamouring to be taken on as domestics at Zaria junction, where we had had to change.

Chance determined my first cook. A W.A.F.F. officer had just arrived at Kano from Bornu, together with his mounted orderly and cook. The cook was returning to Bornu in any case, so I arranged to take him on as a temporary measure, leaving it open whether he should be kept on on arrival at his destination or discharged in favour of a more suitable applicant. The orderly also was attached to me for the journey, thus providing me with a temporary batman.

To complete my staff of personal servants required for the journey, a "small boy" to assist the steward and do odd jobs also was obtained.

Other matters which I attended to during my halt at Kano included the obtaining of a horse, lamp fuel (kerosene), a supply of filter-water from the station condenser, and West African threepenny-bits, for payment of subsistence to carriers. The drawing of filter-water turned out to have been a very necessary precaution. At each halt on the march I poured into the water-carrier all the water that had succeeded in

dripping through my standard drip-filter, which in turn was constantly filled up. Yet, owing to the muddiness of the best well water obtainable *en route*, the supply was so small that on arrival at Maiduguri I had barely a tumblerful of drinking water left.

Except where there is extreme scarcity of water, however, the dry or harmattan season is generally considered to be by far the best time for travelling. One can be sure of keeping dry, and even the larger rivers and swamps are unlikely to prove formidable. The dry season lasts in the Northern Provinces, roughly, from October to April, and is accompanied by the harmattan, a very dry north-east wind from the Sahara. It is laden with extremely minute particles of dust. These are held suspended in the air and form such a thick haze on a still day that it is often impossible to distinguish objects at one hundred yards' distance. It is so dry that men's lips and skin crack, and their eyes often become sore. Objects of all kinds bend and warp. Especially noticeable are the corrugated-iron roofs, which, when subjected to the extreme changes of temperature characteristic of the season, bend in and out with loud reports. During this season the nights and early mornings are cold, but the days are very hot. The difference between night and day temperatures is often as much as 40°. The cold nights are very refreshing. It is only in the extreme north of Nigeria, however, that the real harmattan is experienced. As it travels south the wind dwindles in density, and by the time it reaches the coast contains more vapour than dust. When the rainy season replaces the harmattan the process is reversed. In the south, during this season,

the prevailing wind is from the south-west. It is accompanied by rain, which is extremely heavy on the coast, but speedily decreases as it travels up country.

At the end of the dry season, numerous tornadoes foretell the approach of the rainy season. They are the outcome of the combat between the cold dry north-east trade-winds and the hotter saturated south-west monsoon, which between them account largely for the differences in relative humidity in the different parts of the country during the dry and rainy seasons.

Before a tornado the air is oppressively hot and heavy and the atmosphere abnormally bright. The tornado itself is a heavy squall of comparatively short duration, and is usually followed by a thunderstorm and rain.

Tornadoes usually occur in the afternoon or evening, so that it is advisable when trekking at this time of the year to set off in the morning if possible. Accordingly I arranged to make an early start. Also in accordance with advice, I decided to do a short march only the first day, so that both the carriers and my servants might feel their legs without getting over-tired after their previous days' rest. I gave both the carriers—sixty in number, with two headmen—and my "boys" a start of an hour or two, seeing them off about 7 A.M.

Having watched their departure, I breakfasted with my host, and shortly afterwards set off myself, accompanied by the soldier-orderly, one of the Emir of Kano's mounted *dogaris* (native policeman) and my groom.

In connection with my trek to Maiduguri there is not much in the way of episodes to chronicle. I had no

special duties to perform, and, not at that time being proficient in the native *lingua franca* (Hausa), I did not get into close touch with the people. Hurrying through the country on horseback at the rate of about twenty miles a day along the highroad did not afford me the opportunity of making many detailed observations, especially as I devoted most of my time both on the march and in camp to studying Hausa.

The first few days out from Kano lay through flat country, thickly studded with farms and hamlets, among the trees in the vicinity of which the gnarled baobab was conspicuous. The fertility of this part of Nigeria is so great that Barth has remarked of it: "The Province of Kano may truly be called the garden of Central Africa." But I did not see the garden in the glory of its harvest, since it was but the end of the sowing season when I passed through it.

On leaving Kano Division and entering that of Katagum to the east a short stretch of light woodland is passed through, which tails off into sandy scrub when Bornu is reached. Mimosa and camel-thorn are commonly met with in Katagum, and also palm-trees. The latter become more numerous as one approaches Maiduguri, especially the Egyptian Doum palm, with its curious bifurcations.

Big game in the shape of antelopes and gazelles are to be seen in plenty on this route, and among small game, bustards, francolins, partridges and guinea-fowl abound. From time to time one meets troops of little grey monkeys and now and then a company of dog-faced baboons. At night one often heard the gruesome and melancholy cry of the hyenas as they prowled about

picking up the garbage and searching for victims among the live stock. It was then particularly necessary to guard one's horse from attack, with a view to which the groom would keep a fire burning outside the shelter which served as a stable and sleep close to it. Jackals, also, were numerous in parts.

Among the more striking non-game birds in evidence were grey and red parrots, multi-coloured tits and crown-birds or crested cranes.

The daily routine on the march commenced with an early start. This was necessitated by the relatively long distances, averaging about twenty miles, which had to be covered daily, on account of scarcity of water. The camp began to stir in earnest about 4 A.M. The carriers then entered the rest-house and whisked away all the loads except the bed, in which I was still resting, and a few other items, such as wash-basin, occasional table, and crockery for early morning tea. I would get up about an hour later and, after partaking of tea and a snack, would set off on my horse with the orderly, *dogari* and groom. At this hour it was, of course, still dark.

After about an hour's ride in the dim light we would watch the sun rise ahead, and it would remain in our eyes, slowly mounting to its zenith, for the rest of the march, each day alike, since our course lay due east on every stage of the journey.

The hour before sunrise was delightfully cool, and it was most pleasant riding through the dew-soaked countryside. Sometimes, when there had been heavy rain the previous night, we would leave camp at the usual hour in a fog, which would be dispersed with lightning-like rapidity on the approach of the sun.

HEAD TRANSPORT

Top. A GROUP OF MADA (PAGAN) CARRIERS. THE MAN IN THE CENTRE HAS NOT YET REMOVED HIS PORTER'S PAD FROM HIS HEAD.

Below. HAUSA (MOHAMMEDAN) CARRIERS TRANSPORTING THE LOADS OF AN OFFICIAL.

A few hours after dawn any breeze that we might have been fortunate enough to encounter died away and the sun began to stoke up, with the result that on the longer marches the heat, glare and flatness became painfully depressing. Fortunately in this part of the country, with its sandy roads, it is possible to canter a considerable portion of the way and thus shorten the ordeal of travelling in the heat.

By this means I usually arrived in camp before 10 A.M., ahead of the majority of my carriers, though it was often surprising how close they were to the day's halting-place before I overtook them. To guard against the discomfort of arriving at an empty rest-house before my loads it was arranged that the cook and "small boy" should start off about an hour before the rest of the caravan—*i.e.* about 3 A.M.—together with the bearers of a table, chair, food and drinks. To avoid accidents or delay to these important articles they were entrusted to picked men.

The carriers, whose duty it was to start off in the early hours with the cook, invariably slept in the camp. They often kept the camp-fires burning all night to guard them from wild beasts, and I used to keep a hurricane lamp burning throughout the same period, a rifle handy, and a service revolver under my pillow for a similar purpose.

When approaching a new camp, at the confines of each village or town at which I halted I was met by the Village Head and Elders or by the representatives of the District Head or Emir, as the case might be. He would be accompanied by the *dogari* or messenger-runner, who had borne the intelligence of my arrival

ahead from the previous halting-place, together with details of the food and fuel required by the caravan.

The escort conducted me to the rest-house, where the Sarkin Bariki (*lit.* chief of the barracks—*i.e.* caretaker of the European Rest-House) would be waiting with food, principally consisting of chicken, eggs, sweet potatoes, and guinea-corn in stalk—the latter for the stable—as well as firewood and water. After the escort had been thanked and dismissed the *dogari* would in turn be sent on his way with an appropriate message to the next halting-place.

One Emirate Headquarters lay on my route, at Jamaari, and I was here greeted with more elaborate ceremonial, in accordance with the usual custom of Fulani chiefs on the occasion of the visit of a distinguished stranger, which category includes, of course, any official.

The Emir sent out an escort of horsemen, in command of a kinsman, to meet me some four or five miles out and bring me into the town. It was a picturesque sight, the riders in turbans and flowing gowns, their gaily-caparisoned horses plunging and rearing, maddened by the cruel jagged iron bit and sharp-cornered, shovel-shaped stirrups used by all Hausa horsemen.

A portion of the escort rode ahead, and it was amusing to watch their horsemanship, which was typical of that indulged in by Hausas.

I proceeded part of the way at a canter, and the orderly, who had been trained by European officers in the Mounted Infantry, followed suit, but not so the escort. They favoured short, sharp spurts, at the end of which they would pull their horses up sharply on to

their haunches. These rushes they would alternate with a curious sort of dancing walk, which I found later, when I came to ride a native-trained horse, was a very comfortable form of progression.

On approaching Jamaari the bird's-eye view from a distance was striking. It consisted of a vast extent of rose-red walls enclosing mud buildings shining in the sunlight. Rising from in between these were towering trees and feathery palms silhouetted against a bright blue sky. On entering the town I was impressed by the great solidity and immense size of the defensive walls, not as large as those of Kano, but nevertheless substantial.

In the late afternoon the Emir paid me a State visit. He rode up to the entrance of the rest-house compound surrounded by a cavalcade of followers all rushing and prancing about, and pulling up their horses in a cloud of dust, with a great display of jingling brass and gaudy leather trappings. Having dismounted and taken off his soft Hausa leather riding-boots, he advanced across the compound with several of his officials. I rose to greet him and took the hand which he extended with a courtly bow.

The Emir was a handsome type of Fulani, with refined features and light brown skin. He looked a stately figure in his flowing robes and towering turban, his keen and dignified face peeping out from the folds of his cloth *litham*.

We exchanged a few greetings and topical remarks. I thanked him for his complimentary "present" of foodstuffs, an ornamental mat and crown-bird's crest. This had been duly "paid for" in accordance with

custom by way of a *tukuichi*, or "tip," to the bearer and a return "present" of equivalent value to the donor. The interview was concluded.

A few days later I reached the Kano-Bornu provincial boundary, where I was met by a Government courier, who escorted me into Headquarters.

CHAPTER THREE

To Daroro

ON arrival in Bornu I was posted to the Provincial Office for duty. The work was mostly of a routine character, and included the exercising of the functions of Sub-Accountant in charge of the local Government Treasury, Deputy-Sheriff in charge of the Government prison, local magistrate, and supervisor of recurrent repairs to Public Works.

In spite, however, of this theoretical performance by one official of several officials' duties, in practice I was not overworked at this juncture; and usually found time in the afternoon, after closing the office, to put in an hour or two's local-language study before turning up at polo or tennis, one or other of which were the afternoon recreations on different days.

As regards personnel, being the Headquarters of the Province, Maiduguri was comparatively thickly populated with Europeans. When I was there, there were ten white officials, in addition to several representatives of trading firms. We also had female society, for there was one European lady in the station, the doctor's wife.

The Headquarters' Administrative staff consisted of a Senior Resident in charge of the Province, a District Officer in charge of the Bornu Emirate, and an Assistant District Officer in charge of the Provincial Office, whom I relieved. The Departmental staff comprised a Medical

Officer, a Superintendent of Education, and an Instructor in Arts and Crafts.

A garrison was provided by the W.A.F.F., to which were attached two European officers and two B.N.C.O.'s.

I did not remain long in this happy family, however, for less than three months after my arrival I was transferred southwards.

The staff of the Nasarawa Province had become seriously depleted by invalidings; and, in accordance with arrangements improvised with a view to remedying this state of affairs, I was detailed to proceed to Daroro (formerly known as Jemaan Daroro, or Jemaa), its capital, on transfer, via Bauchi.

To reach Bauchi I first of all retraced my steps westwards along the Kano-Bornu road to Potiskum. Thence my route lay southwards through Darazzo to Bauchi.

The principal feature of the Bornu portion of the route was mud. This constitutes one of the road-makers' chief troubles in the Province. There is hardly any stone in Bornu with which to build a firm foundation, and laterite has normally to be brought from a distance for metalling purposes, at great cost in porterage. Even when the road is built it tends to get buried in sand during the harmattan and dry tornado seasons, and during the rainy season to become an almost impassable bog.

At the border of the Bauchi Province I exchanged my Bornu native staff for a Government courier belonging to the Bauchi Provincial Administration, and an Emir's messenger and *dogari* representing the local native Government, who had been sent to meet me.

The rainy season was now at its height, and much of the remainder of the journey was performed in pouring rain. A considerable portion of the road was under water, and on one occasion, when riding through water I thought to be lying on just a muddy bit of road, my horse suddenly disappeared into the mire up to its neck. Yet, on the whole, travelling in the northern part of the Bauchi Province was much easier than in Bornu clay. Most of the road ran over solid and even stony ground. True, it was badly rutted and washed out by the rains, but this is the normal condition of most undrained roads during the rainy season.

On arrival at Bauchi I found that several thousand pounds worth of specie, mostly done up in hundred-pound bags of shillings, being Government's share of tax received from the Native Administration, were waiting for the opportunity to arise for a European officer to escort them to railhead at Jos, and I was accordingly detailed for this duty. The specie was conveyed in the same way as my personal loads, by carrier transport, so that for the next stage of my journey I found myself in charge of a caravan of a hundred porters, marching at somewhat irregular intervals in extended file. To guard the specie I was provided with an armed escort of the Northern Provincial Police. According to the regulations governing the escort of specie one was required not to let the money out of one's sight throughout the march, which meant that one had to accommodate one's pace to that of the slowest carrier. At night one chained up the money close to one's bed in the rest-house, and posted a police guard over it.

The first part of the route to Jos lies over open grass

country, with here and there an isolated rocky hill standing up sharply above the plain.

A few stages before the completion of the journey the Nigerian Plateau is reached, on which the town of Jos is situated. It is a vast, undulating table-land, with occasional hills of granite and sandstone, and has an elevation of from three thousand to six thousand feet above sea-level. The ascent from the Bauchi plain is extremely steep, and the view from the top, in the direction of Bauchi, magnificent in its huge expanse.

The Plateau has a larger European population—running into hundreds—than any other area in Nigeria of similar size, due to its importance as the centre of the tin-mining industry.

The commencement of the exploitation of tin by Europeans on the Plateau dates from 1902, when, following on the subjugation of the Emir of Bauchi, the country was opened up. For some years the industry experienced great transport difficulties, for the quickest means of reaching the mines was the tedious one of proceeding up the River Benue to Loko, and thence on foot for the best part of a fortnight via Nasarawa, Keffi and Daroro (Jemaa) to Jos.

I have had occasion to follow this route at one time or another in its entirety from Loko to Jos. The experience enabled me to appreciate the incidental health gains which accrued to the mining industry from the building of the light railway to connect the tin-fields at Jos with the main Baro-Kano line at Zaria in 1911, in addition to the main advantage of the reduction of the duration of the journey to the coast to two days in lieu of weeks.

Loko is a low-lying and mosquito-ridden spot, and close to the track on every one of the five stages between Loko and Keffi are to be seen the graves of the mining pioneers of the early days when, prostrated with fever, too ill to be carried to the European stations at Keffi and Loko, they were buried where they died. The location of these graves became familiar to me, for later, when in charge of Keffi Division, it was my duty to inspect them periodically in order to make sure that they were kept tidy and well cared-for.

It was along the last portion of this former tin route that my final trek from Jos to Daroro lay. The latter is situated in a cup at the base of the Plateau, the descent to it down the escarpment from Jos being very steep.

I finally reached Daroro at the beginning of September, having traversed on horseback approximately four hundred miles during the course of the thirty days, inclusive of brief halts at Bauchi and Jos, which had elapsed since I left Maiduguri.

At the time to which I refer, Daroro was the Headquarters of the Nasarawa Province, although it did not long remain so. The Province was founded in 1900, in which year the British Government first began effectively to occupy the country immediately to the north of the Benue river.

Early in that year the first Resident (Major A. Burdon) of what was then known as the Lower Benue Province established his Headquarters at Akwanaja, on the north bank of the Benue, in what is now the Lafia Emirate, whence he began to explore the country to the north.

In the same year, after the formal submission to Government of the Emir of Nasarawa, Headquarters were removed to Nasarawa and the name of the Province changed to Nasarawa Province.

In 1902 the Headquarters of the Province were transferred to Keffi. Here the first Resident, Captain Moloney, was murdered soon after his arrival by the Magajin Keffi, the agent of the Emir of Zaria, who fled to the Court of his suzerain.

On the Emir of Zaria failing to surrender the murderer, the emirates of Nasarawa, Keffi and Jemaa were as a punishment removed from his suzerainty.

Captain Moloney was buried on the top of a rocky hill, at the base of which Keffi is situated, and the grave enclosed by a circular mud wall. As a further memorial, a tall white wooden cross was erected in the public square, immediately outside the Mosque, marking the spot where he was killed.

The seat of the Provincial Administration remained at Keffi until 1912, when it was moved to Daroro, following on the discovery of an alleged valuable lode of tin in the vicinity.

Finally, in 1926, Headquarters were again moved back to Keffi, on account of Daroro being visited by an epidemic of sleeping sickness, resulting in its being temporarily deprived of its entire European Administrative staff.

Shortly afterwards the Province was disbanded, its constituent parts being allocated to other provinces. The reasons for this will be referred to later.

The early tribal history of the area formerly known as the Nasarawa Province is shrouded in obscurity, and

can only vaguely be reconstructed from references in legends and folk-lore.

So far as is known, the earliest indigenous tribe is the Koro, while the earliest immigrations are those of the Gbari from the east and the Gwandara from the north.

Both settled in the north-western parts of the Province, and the Gbari, although much more numerous than either the Koro or the Gwandara, came under the political domination of one or other of these tribes.

This state of affairs seems to be explained by the fact that the average Gbari is a law-abiding and peaceful farmer, who asks for nothing better than to be allowed to live quietly on his farm or in his village. The local representatives of this tribe, with very few exceptions, appear unable to find among themselves men ambitious or capable of taking the lead in anything greater than village affairs, and they almost instinctively look upon the Koro or Gwandara as their superiors and rulers.

The Koro are now a decadent tribe, decreasing in numbers, whereas the Gbari are increasing steadily.

The Gwandara, who claim to have been the original inhabitants of Kano, whence they were driven by the Wangaras, appear to have followed game-tracks southwards to the north-western foothills of the Bauchi Plateau, and thence to have scattered southwards and westwards to their present habitat.

Other numerous tribes, such as the Bassas, the Afu and the Mada, are generally supposed to have migrated from the south-east.

The Kwottos, inhabiting the south-western corner of the Province, are immigrants of Jukun stock, whose

history will be referred to in detail in a subsequent chapter. About the year 1750 they founded the kingdom of Panda, the capital of which was situated in what is now the Fulani Emirate of Nasarawa. Prior to the Fulani invasion of the Benue area in the nineteenth century the Kwotto influence extended over the greater part of what are to-day the Muslim emirates of Nasarawa, Lafia, Abuja and Keffi.

The later history of the Province has been summarised in the officially published *Provincial Gazetteer*, from which the following extract is taken:

"About the beginning of the nineteenth century the Fulani invasion commenced in earnest. Though Nomad Fulani herdsmen had visited the Province annually during the dry season in previous times, it was not till about the end of the eighteenth century that the more northern districts of Nasarawa Province began to suffer from slave-raiders, and that parties of Fulani and Habe [*i.e.* Hausa] commenced to settle in them.

"The first ten years of the nineteenth century saw certain Fulani and Habe firmly established in fortified strongholds, from whence they raided the surrounding country, and sent northwards long caravans of slaves. They penetrated southwards, and even crossed the Benue and raided in the Idah Kingdom.

"The end of the nineteenth century saw the complete ruin and depopulation of the Province. Sir Frederick [now Lord] Lugard, reporting in 1902, incorporates the following remarks of Sir W. Wallace: ' . . . In the Nassarawa country, a once fertile and populous province, one can now only view the remains and ruins of large and totally deserted towns, bearing witness to

the desolation wrought by 100 years of internecine strife and slave-raiding by the Fulani.'

"The remaining inhabitants of such towns fled to the hills in all directions; those who approached the eastern and north-eastern confines of the Province, until they learned how to defend themselves, were further raided by the Headhunting tribes who inhabit these hilly localities. Others intermarried with Headhunting tribes and themselves adopted their customs. Such was the state of the Province when the arrival of Sir Frederick Lugard put a stop to slave-raiding, and evolved law and order out of chaos and ruin."

Five Muslim kingdoms or emirates were founded in the early part of the nineteenth century:

Keffi, *circa* A.D. 1802 (originally Katsina Fulani).

Abuja, *circa* A.D. 1804 (originally Habe from Zaria).

Lafia Beriberi, *circa* A.D. 1804 (originally Beriberi from Bornu).

Jemaan Daroro, *circa* A.D. 1810 (originally Cattle Fulani from Kajur).

Nasarawa, *circa* A.D. 1835 (originally of the Keffi Fulani).

The descendants of the founders of these kingdoms to-day rule over the territories which their ancestors had conquered up to the date of the establishment of the British Protectorate.

A few tribes, such as the Mada, the Nungu and the Mama, inhabiting the hilly country at the foot of the Bauchi Plateau, and the Kagoro, Moroa and Jaba in the north-east corner of the Province, had retained their independence up to the time of our arrival. This was accordingly not interfered with, and the areas occupied

by the six tribes in question were organised as independent pagan units, their administration being kept distinct from that of their conquered neighbours.

But for the arrival of the British these tribes too would in all probability have been sooner or later subdued and their territory annexed by the emirs.

During the period to which this narrative refers the Nasarawa Province was divided into four Administrative divisions, named respectively Jemaa — after (Jemaan) Daroro — Lafia, Abuja and Keffi. The area of the Province as then constituted was 16,710 square miles, and it carried a population of 19·3 to the square mile.

I saw service at one time or another in each of the divisions, and also on the supernumerary staff of the Province in the capacity of Administrative Officer in charge of "political" labour employed on the construction of the Nigerian Eastern Railway through it.

I shall have something to say concerning my experiences in the divisions and on Railway Construction in the succeeding chapters, and also concerning the manners, habits and customs of certain of the tribes inhabiting the Province, which have hitherto been but little studied.

Soon after the completion of the construction of the Nigerian Eastern Railway, in 1926, the opportunity provided by the consequent great improvement in the communications of the country was taken by the Government to reorganise the whole of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria.

The need of the reorganisation was obvious, since many of the existing provinces owed their boundaries to considerations of expediency of the kind usually

associated with the method, that of piecemeal military conquest, by which they had originally been acquired.

The result was, from an ethnological standpoint, to unite a number of areas containing many tribes possessing an interrelated history and traditions, of linguistic affinities and following similar customs. One Administrative aspect of the change was the provision of greater facility of communication and improved boundaries between the constituent divisions of the new provinces.

Under this reorganisation scheme the Nasarawa Province ceased to exist as such. The Jemaa Division and a portion of the Lafia Division were transferred to the newly constituted Plateau Province; the Abuja Division likewise joined cognate neighbours in the Niger (formerly Nupe) Province; while the three historically connected emirates of Lafia, Keffi and Nasarawa were amalgamated with certain territories south of the River Benue to form a new unit, christened the Benue Province.

As will be seen, it is more particularly with the tribes of the former Lower Benue and Nasarawa provinces, now incorporated in the Benue Province, that this book is concerned.

CHAPTER FOUR

In Closed Country

LAFIA DIVISION, the first Administrative area to which I was attached in the Nasarawa Province, was divided into two parts. The southern part consisted of the Lafia Emirate, and the northern of the four independent pagan districts of North and South Mada, Nungu and Mama. The latter were scheduled as unsettled districts, under the Unsettled Districts Ordinance, which meant that they were closed to the entry of all but Government officials, who themselves would normally be accompanied by an armed escort when touring them.

My duties lay chiefly among the pagan tribes—namely, the Mama, Mada and Nungu—inhabiting these districts. All of them were formerly headhunters, and also admittedly cannibal. At the time to which I refer, however, only the Mama, and some of the Nungus living on the borders of the Mama District, could be said, on the evidence of their present-day conduct, still to merit being so described.

This state of affairs was not due, of course, to any disposition on the part of the Government to tolerate the practices of headhunting and anthropophagy. It was a result of various chance circumstances, such as the inaccessibility of the district and Government shortage of staff, which had operated to prevent these tribes from being brought for practical purposes under any adequate Administrative control.

MAMA CORN-BINS

A CLUSTER OF CORN-BINS MINUS THEIR CONTENTS AND THATCHED ROOFS WHICH HAD BEEN BURNED IN THE COURSE OF AN INTER-VILLAGE HEAD-HUNTING RAID.

A MAMA COMPOUND

MEMBERS OF MY POLITICAL STAFF AND A POLICE ORDERLY ARE TO BE SEEN IN THE FOREGROUND.

Certain aspects of the custom of headhunting, which prevailed also in former times, together with limited ritual anthropophagy, among the Kwottos of the Nasarawa Emirate, will be referred to in detail when describing the customs of the latter tribe. For it was only among the Kwottos that I found an opportunity of discussing the reasons for their customs with anthropophagus headhunters in a friendly atmosphere *tête-à-tête*.

Each of the three organised independent districts—namely, North and South Mada and Nungu—had a native court, empowered to try petty cases, presided over by the District Head, who was assisted by his principal village Sarakuna (elders), who sat as members of the court. These native courts had, however, in certain portions of their territorial jurisdiction, a purely nominal authority—that is to say, the judicial decisions of the district heads were in practice not recognised by the more remote and lawless sections of their subjects.

In Mama District there were no native courts, nominal or otherwise. Consequently, in the absence of any central or supra-village arbitral authority, inter-village grievances had to await the arrival of a Government officer on tour to be determined. For no attention was paid by the war-like Mamas, secure in their hill-top fortresses, to official messengers or summonses unaccompanied by their senders. In practice, owing to the fact that Divisional Officers, for various reasons, could pay only comparatively rare visits to the district, disputes arising in it were more frequently settled by direct action between the parties than in any other manner.

To deal with alien natives throughout the independent districts there was a central *Alkali's* (Muslim magistrate) court, whose powers were superior to those of the District courts. There were also Headquarters and District native courts in the Lafia Emirate.

There were two native administration prisons in the division, as also two native treasuries (*Beyut-el-Mal*), at Lafia and Akwanga, for the Emirate and independent districts respectively.

The latter town, besides serving for certain purposes as a joint Administrative Headquarters for the four independent districts, was also the Headquarters of the European Divisional Administration. On the route from Daroro to Akwanga the first town of importance one reaches is Nunku, the Headquarters of the independent district of North Mada.

Here I made the acquaintance of the acting District Head, by name Abubakr, and his staff. He had only recently been appointed to succeed his father, Mangar, Sarkin Nunku, who had died as the result of an accident the previous month.

An old Dane gun and a flask of powder had come into his possession following on the death in his district of a wandering hunter. Before dispatching the gun to Divisional Headquarters he loaded it with a heavy charge of powder. He then discharged it into the middle of a small fire that was burning in one of his huts, having left the powder-flask open about two feet away. The resulting explosion killed his wife immediately, and he himself died a few days later from injuries received. The whole of his residence was burned down.

The new District Head was absent from his Headquarters when I arrived, but soon after I had settled down I perceived a crowd of people coming along the road towards the rest-house, escorting a heavily turbaned and gowned individual on horseback, to the accompaniment of drums, trumpets and wind instruments.

The interview commenced with greetings and the delivery of the customary *kayan sauka*, or the present made by a chief to his superior on the occasion of the latter's arrival in his district. Such are, of course, in accordance with Government regulations, duly acknowledged and paid for, either in cash or by a return present, by the recipient.

After greetings, he informed me that he had only just come back from investigating a report of murder. A North Mada pagan had been killed in a drunken village quarrel, and the District Head had apprehended the alleged murderer. As the District Head did not possess sufficient powers to deal with the case the usual instructions were given for him to collect the witnesses and send them into Akwanga for the investigation of the case by the Provincial Court.

This was the first murderer to be apprehended by the new District Head in his capacity as such, but the work of arresting homicides in this unsettled district was no novelty to him.

Only a few months previously two murderers, who had been tried and sentenced to death by the District Officer with special full powers, had been executed at the village of Andahar, close to Nunku, before an assembly of about three hundred villagers from the surrounding area.

A month after this execution an affray had occurred between the villages of Kantaza, in North Mada District, and Ancho, in the Ninzam District of Jemaa Division. On investigation by the District Officer it was found that after a joint game-drive both parties had gathered together at the village of Bakin Riga, and all got very drunk. A dispute arose, and the usual fight ensued, in which three Kantaza men and four Ancho men were wounded, one of the latter fatally. The whole affair was a drunken brawl. The Kantaza villagers paid compensation to Ancho, and were also fined by the native court. The Ancho villagers paid compensation to Kantaza.

The case referred to above, which the new District Head of Nunku had reported, was investigated by me on my arrival at Akwanga. It proved to be a case of murder, involving a breach of truce, committed, as a result of a blood-feud between two villages, on the conclusion of an inter-village beer-feast to which the accused with his companions had been invited.

The case was eventually tried by the Resident of the Province, and sentence of death passed, but with a strong recommendation to the commutation of the sentence to one of a few months' imprisonment.

Even a short term of imprisonment is a severe punishment to a raw undisciplined pagan such as was the accused. The unaccustomed curtailment of liberty, and especially his forced deprivation of beer and lack of opportunity for sexual indulgence, soon drives him into a state of melancholia, which may so affect his physical powers of resistance as to lead to his early death.

Not long after my arrival at Akwanga I was instructed to proceed on tour to the Nungu and Mama Districts in connection with the organisation of labour for work on certain P.W.D. bridges then being built on the line of a road from Keffi through Akwanga to Mama. All these bridges were of timber excepting that across the Farin Rua river in Mama District, which was to be of the steel-girder type—partly, it was said, as a precaution against arson. They were all supported by cement piers, and designed to take vehicles up to two-ton axle-load.

The chief bridges then under construction, or to be constructed, on this route in the Lafia Division were over the Sherigia river in the South Mada District, the Gudi river in the Nungu District, and the Farin Rua river in the Mama District. Of these the first two were under construction, while the Farin Rua bridge had yet to be started.

But for an untimely accident, caused by a flood, the Sherigia bridge would have been completed. A sudden heavy flood occurring in the middle of the rainy season washed away the false work under the last uncompleted span of the bridge. One girder of this span had been completed the day before the flood came, but work had not yet been begun on the second. It was found possible to save the one girder by means of ropes and tackle when the false work went, so that actually very little damage was done by the flood. The work, however, was delayed, as a wait had to be made until the river had subsided sufficiently for new false work to be set up. A temporary footbridge of planks was fixed to the girder that had been saved, and this enabled

pedestrians to use the bridge all through the wet season.

The chief object of my visit to the Nungu and Mama districts was to prepare the ground for obtaining Mama labour for work on the new bridge over the Farin Rua, and to build a camp for the European foreman and his artisans. The site selected for the bridge was not far from a village named Ukambu. My first task was to organise labour to clear the road from the Nungu District Headquarters at Wamba past Ukambu to the bridge site. This route, which had become much overgrown during the rainy season, was the one over which it was proposed during the forthcoming dry season to transport the necessary bridging materials and food supplies. A certain amount of difficulty was experienced in organising the necessary labour owing to the unsettled state of the Mama District, a condition reflected also in the state of the Nungu villages on the Nungu-Mama border.

Of these latter, the four villages of Kwassa, Kwanza, Ugori and Wanju had for some time past adopted an attitude of resistance to the Native Administration. Perched on all but inaccessible hill-tops, as are nearly all the Mama and adjacent Nungu villages, the inhabitants were able to perceive the imminent approach of anyone in authority laboriously climbing in their direction and, if they so desired, to make themselves scarce long before the arrival of the envoys of the Administration.

On the previous occasion, a month or two before, when they had been visited by a European officer, the latter had been unable to get in touch with the villagers,

although he had spent two days in trying to do so. The village of Wanju especially proved intractable, and eventually drove out the messenger sent to them, speeding his departure with a few poisoned arrows. The next day the village was paid a visit by the District Officer at dawn, and suitable measures taken.

Promises of better conduct in the future were received from all four villages. These promises, however, proved to be similar to the proverbial pie-crust, and when I visited them soon afterwards I met with a like experience. Wanju repulsed my messenger, as they had that of the District Officer, with arrows, and I was constrained to follow his example in visiting the village at dawn. After this visit, when the villagers saw that I apparently intended to "sit down," as the expression is, in the vicinity with my police escort until the road was cleared, they turned out in force and completed the work.

I have already mentioned that Government officers when touring in the four unsettled districts of the division were frequently accompanied by a police escort for their protection. This was invariably the case in the Mama District, which at that time was almost the last district in the Northern Provinces of Nigeria of which it could be said that it had not yet been brought for practical purposes under any form of control.

The inhabitants of the district were among the most primitive in the country. To the European it superficially appeared, and had even at one time been reported, that the different families living in a hamlet or village did not recognise the existence of any village authority. The fact of the matter was that the real rulers of each village were persons regarded as sacred,

whose identity was religiously concealed from strangers, lest danger should befall them.

When a Government officer arrived, therefore, and summoned the Village Head to an interview, some person of no importance, told to pretend he was a chief, was detailed to meet him. On subsequent visits the same deception was kept up, so that it sometimes happened that an upstart became unwittingly recognised by Government as a chief. The difficulty of enforcing Administrative orders through the mediumship of such representatives can be imagined.

In these circumstances it was obviously necessary for the very foundations of Native Administration organisation to be laid before the district could begin to show any improvement. Hitherto, owing to shortage of staff and the heavy work involved in bringing under control and establishing Administrative machinery in the other unsettled districts in the division, the only attention which it had been possible to give to Mama District was for a Political Officer to visit it for a month or two each year or a patrol to tour it during the dry season.

Prior to the building of the P.W.D. bridges between Akwanga and Farin Rua it had actually been impossible to maintain touch with the Mama throughout the rainy season, owing to the fact that swollen rivers effectually cut it off from the rest of the division. It was therefore hardly to be wondered at that on the withdrawal of the Administrative officer or patrol, at the end of the dry season, the district used to fall back into its usual anarchic state.

The District Officer, accompanied by a police patrol, had made a prolonged tour of the district in the early

part of the year in which I arrived. Yet on the termination of his visit, as soon as the Mama realised that they were again being left alone, cases of murder, highway robbery, kidnapping and slave-trading were again reported.

Slaves were one of the principal exports of the district. The traffic in slaves as conducted by the Mama usually took the form of kidnapping children from neighbouring villages. The children were then traded across the provincial border to the Plateau pagans for cattle. The latter traded them on the Fulani herdsmen, with whom the children remained as slaves. The nomadic habits and extreme reserve of the cattle-owning Fulani rendered the detection of the existence of slaves among them difficult.

Another thorn in the side of the Administration of Mama District was arrears of taxation. Their existence was caused entirely by the unsettled state of the district. It was, and is, potentially as wealthy a district as any in the division, being particularly rich in palm-oil and guinea-corn. There was not much cash in the district, but there was a good deal of material wealth readily convertible into it, had the Mamas been disposed to take the trouble to do so. The inhabitants, however, at that time preferred to do their trade by barter. They bartered their surplus oil and corn in exchange for cattle from the Bauchi Plateau for their own consumption. As they wore no clothing whatever, and desired little that they could not themselves produce, they formed practically a self-contained district. The alien trader therefore was of no advantage to them, and if he passed through the territory he was liable to be robbed,

if not murdered. Consequently, being given a wide berth by the traders, the district had no local means of obtaining cash when the necessity for paying taxes arose, nor would the inhabitants leave their villages in search of money.

The lawless state of the district at this time may be judged from the following incidents.

In the early part of the year, at the end of the dry season, the villagers of Jini made a headhunting raid on the villagers of Tuki in the neighbouring Pankshin Division, two of the latter being killed. Prompt action was taken by the District Officer against Jini. While searching the village, which had been deserted at his approach, one Mandung, the headman, was seen manœuvring to snipe the District Officer's party. Eventually, in self-defence, the latter shot the Village Head. Full compensation was paid by the Jini villagers to Tuki.

In the following month Daginbwem of Ukambu, tried and convicted by the District Officer with special full powers on a charge of murder, was publicly executed at Ukambu. The relations of Daginbwem's victim, shortly after his execution, decided to take the law into their own hands, and killed Njaku, Daginbwem's accomplice, who was wanted for murder but had succeeded in avoiding arrest. This appeared to settle the feud.

Two months later the new Sarkin Jini reported the murder of his son Jamak by men of Tuki, in Pankshin Division, probably in revenge for the murder of the Tuki man already referred to. The matter was dealt with by the D.O. at Pankshin.

About the same time one Burropwa, of Aiyashi village,

shot and killed one Ngyow, brother of his runaway wife, apparently in a fit of rage. Burropwa escaped into the neighbouring Jemaa Division, and was arrested there, but while being escorted to Akwanga by Jemaa *dogari* effected his escape, and up to the time I left the division had not been recaptured.

Later in the rainy season a case of highway robbery by Arum villagers was reported, also the kidnapping of an Anka youth from Jemaa Division by inhabitants of Chesu. Three months afterwards a second Anka youth was kidnapped by Chesu men. Turkwan village about the same time carried out one of its periodical raids on the village of Ambal Karami, of Ayu District, in Jemaa Division, and took away a quantity of palm-nuts. A few days later Arum men raided this same village of Ambal Karami and kidnapped a boy. In all these cases the Mama villagers had refused to restore the kidnapped youths or hand over the culprits.

At the time of my visit these matters remained in abeyance. I did not deal with them, since to attempt to restore order and then immediately afterwards to leave the district might have resulted in a worse loss of prestige than a temporary policy of *laissez-faire*. My immediate task was to get the P.W.D. camp built at the Farin Rua bridge site, and after this had been done, and work started on the bridge, I returned to Akwanga, leaving a police detachment stationed at Farin Rua to act as a camp guard.

During the ensuing months I paid several further visits to the Nungu and Mama Districts, in the company of the P.W. engineer, in connection with the organisation of labour.

I did not see the bridge completed, however, for shortly afterwards I was transferred for duty in the capacity of Political Officer in charge of Railway Labour to the line of construction of the Nigerian Eastern Railway, then passing through the Province, to take the place of an officer proceeding on leave.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Way of the Land Canoe

WHEN the Hausas first saw a railway train they dubbed it "*jirigin kasa*," or "land canoe," since it resembled nothing they had seen before so much as the "*jirigin wuta*," or "steam canoe," introduced by Europeans many years earlier. The *jiragen wuta* were the stern-wheeler paddle-boats which, plying on the inland waterways of Nigeria, the Niger and Benue rivers, provided the only means of mechanical locomotion in the early Company days.

The rail road or way was likewise dubbed in the early days "*hanyar jirigin kasa*," or "the way of the land canoe." Nowadays the word "land" is generally omitted, since the phrase does not lend itself to confusion with any term in the nautical vocabulary.

The Nigerian Eastern Railway starts from Port Harcourt, on the Bonny Estuary, and effects a junction with the Western line at Kaduna. From Kafanchan a connecting line runs to Jos, an important centre in connection with the tin-mining industry. The Benue river is crossed at Makurdi by means of a train-ferry, which is capable of taking a whole train at a time, but this will in a year or two be replaced by a bridge, the largest of its kind in Africa, at present in course of construction.

Early in 1927 I travelled by rail from Port Harcourt to Makurdi, and later the same year from Makurdi to

Kaduna. But in 1923, the year in which I was first posted to the Nasarawa Province — which included roughly the area between the Benue river and Kafanchan—railway construction working parties had been only three months in the Province, and there was not an inch of completed railway to be seen. The building of the railway between the Benue river and Kafanchan, a distance of approximately one hundred and sixty miles, took four years to complete, on account of the difficult nature of much of the country through which it passed, and employed continuously for the greater part of the time not less than five thousand "political" labourers, in addition to "permanent" and "voluntary" gangs. It was finally completed in 1926, when the ceremony of linking up the last rail was performed at Gerti, near Kafanchan, by His Excellency the Governor, in the presence of a large and representative gathering of European officials and native chiefs.

I was posted to railway construction early in 1924 for duty in the capacity of Political Officer in charge of all "enlisted" or "political" labour employed in the Nasarawa Province, and remained on the line of construction for the greater part of the year.

Now that the railway has been completed, a brief general description of the conditions under which it was built, in so far as such matters came under my personal observation, and are not of a confidential character, may be of interest, and at this date be given without fear of indiscretion.

I was not personally concerned with the engineering side of the work, and shall therefore refer to that aspect of it only in general terms.

The general engineering plan appeared to be to push the earthworks on as far and as fast as possible with the maximum number of labourers that could be worked. The not uncommon arrangement of keeping bridging parties close to railhead, in order that the bridging materials might be brought up on rails, was not deemed necessary, nor did the location of bridging sections bear any close relation to the progress of track-laying. Thus one bridge might be under construction at railhead, another between two sections of earthworks, and yet another in the bush, in the van of all other work except only that of the advanced surveyors and the motor-road section. Advanced earthwork and bridging sections were connected with railhead by a serviceable motor-road, a temporary structure which was allowed to revert to bush as soon as track-laying passed it. The culverting material used in bridging streams on the disused parts of the motor-road were pulled up and used farther ahead, and the temporary motor-road bridges over the larger rivers were likewise broken up in their turn. The political labourers employed on the construction of the railway through the Nasarawa Province were drawn from every division of the Province.

As the political labour reliefs from the different divisions arrived they all reported to me, unless I arranged otherwise, and I allocated them to the Foremen of Works direct, in accordance with the wishes of the Construction authorities. My dispositions were, of course, subject to any special instructions I might receive from the Resident of the Province, or requests from officers in charge of divisions. Political labour was, as far as possible, employed on that part of the

work which was situated nearest to the districts from which they came.

During the period over which I was in charge of the political labour, desertions from the work were not numerous. Such as occurred were probably mostly to be attributed to the following causes in order of importance.

Firstly, during the rainy season there was the fear of the labourers that their crops would spoil during their absence owing to some of them being allowed to become over-ripe in the farms and to depredations of birds, monkeys and other pests.

Secondly, some became discontented with their work. Labourers from certain tribes became very tired of carrying earth out of deep cuttings and up steep banks, and did not show their best form after about a week, unless encouraged. Probably for this reason earthworks were less popular than either bridging or track-laying, on which latter two sections the proportion of desertions was less. The general contentment of the labourers was of course dependent in no small degree on the quality of the attention paid them by the European Construction officials, for labourers lost keenness and would not do their best without constant European supervision and a visible interest being shown in them by their Foremen of Works.

A third cause of occasional unrest was lack of domestic amenities, caused by the absence in many instances of wives. Wives, while at the work, in addition to adding considerably to the labourers' creature comforts, were instrumental in defeating the local middlemen by purchasing food in outlying markets far afield. Raw pagans

MAMA WOMEN

NOTE THE NOSE, EAR, AND LIP PLUGS, ORNAMENTS AND COWRIE-DECORATED APRONS.

were the chief offenders, for their womenfolk were shy of showing themselves in their customary home-life nakedness among the more sophisticated tribes working on the line. On the other hand, their innate conservatism—usually stronger in pagan women than in pagan men, and bound up with superstitions in connection with childbirth — prevented them from adopting foreign customs more suitable to Construction conditions. As an illustration of the operation of this cause might be cited a case of a contingent of Tula volunteer labourers from Gombe, in the neighbouring Bauchi Province. These men deserted from the work *en masse* in March 1924, after only a few weeks on the line, solely, I consider, on account of home-weariness and lack of domestic amenities.

Again, a succession of deaths in a camp from some reason, as from illness or from attack from wild beasts, would produce panic and wholesale desertion. A case of the latter occurred in 1923 close to the Mada river, when a number of deaths were caused by the visits of a lion or leopard man-killer to the various camps.

Hunters and traps of all kinds were employed against it without success. The animal made itself a very real terror, particularly in Alizaga village, where for a month an average of two people a week were killed by it. Two attempts were made by the District Officer in charge of Lafia Division to shoot the brute, but both were failures, the animal refusing to put in an appearance. Shortly after the second night's vigil a leopard was found dead in the neighbourhood. It had apparently fought with a lion and its back had been broken by a blow from the lion's paw. The next day a large

lion was shot in the vicinity by a native hunter. After the death of these two creatures no further casualties occurred from lions or leopards in the railway camps, confidence was restored and desertion ceased.

Lastly, a further possible cause for desertion, which might occasionally operate but which from its nature was very difficult of detection, was the illegal demanding of a percentage of their wages from labourers. Corrupt members of the Native Administration, or of the messenger or interpreter class employed on Construction, or sophisticated Hausa or Southern Provinces' peg-boys or artisans, have been known, under the cloak of an assumed authority, to make demands of unsophisticated pagan labourers which the latter in their ignorance do not know to be unlawful. I was always on the look-out for anything of this nature, and dealt with it vigorously when detected.

Even if only because he was empowered in his magisterial capacity thus to deal with petty crime arising in the labour camps, and so check potential causes of demoralisation among the workers, the presence of a Political Officer on the line of construction was a *sine qua non*. In practice, however, I found that my judicial work was one of the least onerous of my duties. My principal function was to act as an intermediary between the engineers in charge of sections and the Foremen-of-Works in charge of sub-sections on the one hand and the local (native) representatives on Construction of the various Native Administrations, who were providing labour and organising food supplies, on the other.

I was responsible for keeping the political labour

organised and fed, and in general for looking after their interests, more particularly as regards fairness of tasks set and payment. I was answerable to the Resident of the Province for the suitability of the conditions obtaining in the local political labour camps. These were under the immediate control of Foremen-of-Works, responsible not to me but to the engineers. This system of diarchy, necessary as it was, contained, as can be imagined, the seeds of a certain amount of friction.

A really keen engineer naturally tended to give more consideration to the task of building the railway at the minimum cost and the maximum speed than to labour conditions regarded as an end in themselves. Likewise a keen Political Officer charged with upholding the interests of the labour, no less conscientiously, tended to insist for political reasons on what he considered to be adequate conditions of living and work for the natives regardless of any expense or delay it might occasion to construction, since he was not, of course, in any way concerned with the technical part of the work. But owing to the reasonable spirit which usually prevailed on both sides it was extraordinary, considering how frayed tempers can become under tropical conditions, how few were the serious disputes in which I actually became involved.

I spent most of my time on the Earthworks section, where the bulk of the labour was employed, keeping in touch with my staff of Native Administration officials on other sections by correspondence, and by paying them periodical visits to inspect their work and hear complaints.

I did not have to deal with all complaints personally, however, for in my judicial capacity I was assisted by the local *alkalis* of the different divisions, who paid periodical visits to the line. They held court in the different camps under my control. Their criminal jurisdiction was chiefly exercised in cases of stealing and assault. The civil cases were mostly debt and matrimonial.

My Native Administration staff at each labourers' camp consisted chiefly of "political overseers" appointed through the native political chiefs (*i.e.* Emirs or Independent District Heads) supplying the labour, to look after it on their behalf, and Native Administration scribes and supernumerary Native Administration camp police (*dogarai*) attached to them. Musicians (mixed instruments—mostly drummers and flute-players) also were provided with the labour.

Reference has been made above to the presence of political overseers. A word as to their *raison d'être* and functions may not be out of place. The system of political overseers was started in 1923. It replaced a system of direct control of political labour by railway gangers and "peg-boys," which had resulted, perhaps inevitably, in unsympathetic handling of the labour, to consequent dissatisfaction with the work and desertion, and, as a corollary, to increased difficulty in recruiting. This change of system in the sphere of Labour Administration was in principle analogous to the political change from "Direct" to "Indirect" rule introduced into the Southern Provinces in 1914, and it brought with it analogous advantages.

Some of the railway officials were, as was only to

be expected, at first inclined to resent what without justification they considered to be usurpation of their authority, in the same way as some Political Officers, accustomed by lifelong habit to "Direct" rule, have been known to look askance at the increased power and privileges in relation to their peoples delegated by Government to native chiefs under the system of "Indirect" rule. Aided, however, by a little tact on both sides, this difficulty was surmounted.

I found that a good political overseer was a most valuable adjunct to the work, considered from a political standpoint and also from the point of view of getting the men to work. For such overseers, holding, as they did, small (unsalaried) *sarautas—i.e.* native titles of nobility—from their Emir or District Head, were recognised by the labour in much the same way as a private will recognise his sergeant-major irrespective of the man himself. On the military analogy the railway gangers and peg-boys might be compared to foreign N.C.O.'s having an indifferent acquaintance with the language and customs of their troops. When I took over my duties on Construction each gang of political labour, consisting of twenty-four men, was under a political headman.

The labour was paid twice a month. Owing to the large number of men to be paid, and the distance between camps, it often took up to four days to pay them all off. The payments were made by the Railway Paymasters, and I was present on each occasion to investigate any complaints made by the labourers of short payment or unfair treatment.

Another subject in connection with which I had to

deal with the Paymaster was that of compensation. In the case of accidents or deaths to labour in the course of blasting operations, or by falls of rock in cuttings or quarries, the claims for compensation were referred to me in my capacity as representative of the labour.

I was also concerned with the question of compensation to be awarded in the case of damage to houses and farms. This was assessed in the first place by the Emir or District Head, and, provided I considered the claim fair and reasonable, I applied for the compensation to the engineer in charge. Five shillings or ten shillings compensation given, for example, for a farm disturbed by the motor-road always helped to make things smoother when the Earthworks section came along.

Such action was useful in gaining the confidence of pagan Village Heads, and helped to make the Railway popular. It never hurt to try to get a neighbouring Village Head a ride on a lorry at the first convenient moment. The experience was more often than not a novelty to him. It made him feel important, and he would be the more willing on account of such attention to help the Railway.

Another important factor in maintaining the confidence of the owners of agricultural and sylvan produce adjoining the Railway was the dealing publicly and expeditiously with labourers who might, possibly thoughtlessly, steal a handful of ground-nuts or beans, pick palm-kernels or tap the individually owned trees for palm-wine, or perpetrate some other minor theft.

On a par with the latter as regards damage were cases of traders coming through with cattle and sheep to the markets, in which pagan farms *en route* had been

eaten by the live stock. The latter were necessary to the markets, and, as there was often no more than a bush-path from the main road to the market, one had to watch the interests of both the pagans on the road and the traders.

Political labour in general seldom had to buy in camp markets, as Political Officers used to advise every village to keep their men supplied with food after the route rations were finished. The real pagan always showed a great reluctance to buy food in the markets, preferring to eat food brought from his district, which was cheaper; but he would buy red fezes and chains, loin-coverings, cloths and such-like, just the reverse being the case with the Muslim Hausa or Fulani.

Yet, in spite of the assistance in the matter of food supplies rendered to their relatives on Construction by their fellow-villagers, it was a matter of the utmost importance to keep the camp markets well supplied with food. On these supplies all non-political labour in the main depended, in addition to any political labour that might be temporarily short.

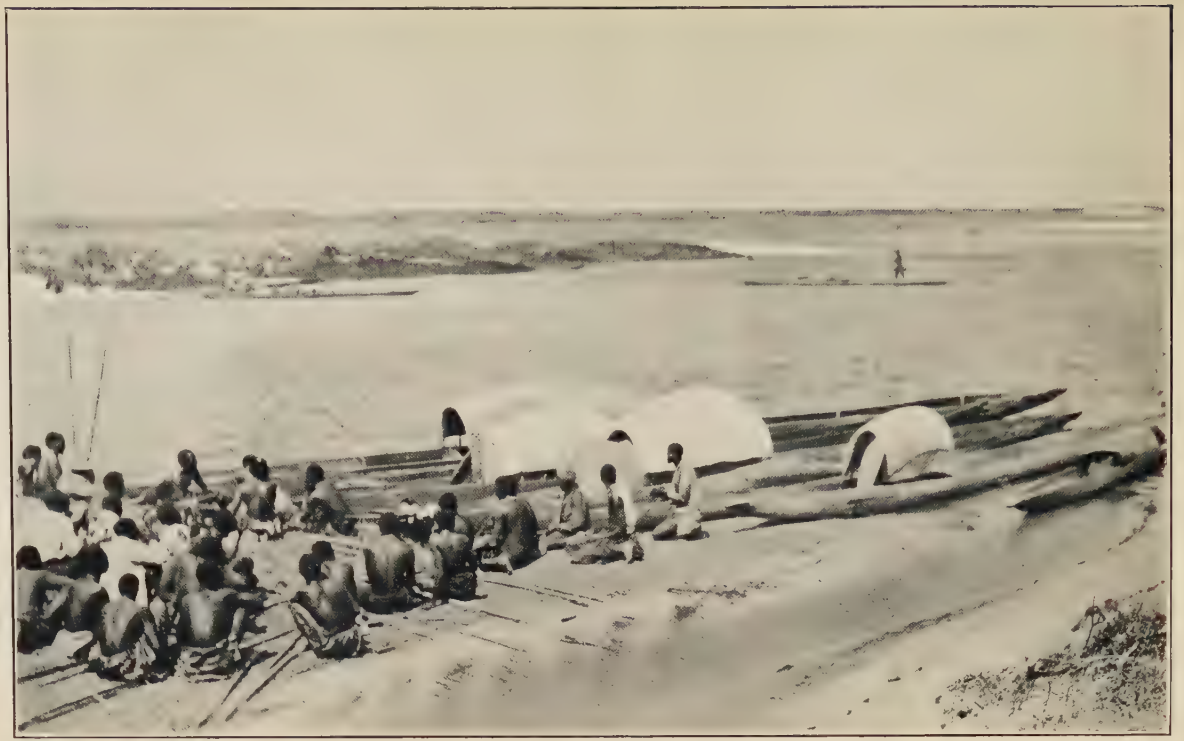
Various emergency measures were necessary to cope with shortage of food, from time to time, of the type with which one became familiar in England during the Great War; and I spent no little time in devising means, in conjunction with officers in charge of neighbouring divisions, of stimulating the bringing in of produce.

It was, of course, out of the question to permit labourers to leave the work for the purpose of foraging for themselves in neighbouring villages, although their wives and the market-women were free to do so.

In fact, it was not advisable to allow parties of Construction labourers, traders or camp-followers to swarm into native villages adjacent to Construction in any circumstances, since the villagers might find it beyond their power to cope with undesirables in any considerable number. A case occurred at Kaderko, a small village of half-a-dozen compounds in Lafia Division, in which three hundred labourers, with traders and camp-followers, swarmed into the village, much to the discomfiture of the inhabitants. They refused to quit, and a forcible ejectment supervised by the District Head of Lafia took place by moonlight, to the great satisfaction of the villagers, and probably to the expedition of the construction of the shelters at the native Construction camp.

But the relations of District Heads with Construction were by no means generally of an unpleasant nature, as in the instance just referred to. D.O.'s from time to time used to send Emirs or District Heads on visits of inspection to the Railway. On such occasions they would report to me, and I would introduce them to the railway officials and endeavour to increase their interest in railway construction by explaining to them the principles of the construction of earthworks and bridges, the methods of blasting, and so on. The political labourers always greatly appreciated the interest shown in them by their chiefs, and the additional interest of the latter was calculated to have a stimulating effect on recruiting.

Local chiefs were sometimes invited actually to take part in ceremonies designed to celebrate Construction achievements. Such celebrations had an important



KWOTTO BOATMEN

THE TYPE OF CANOE SHOWN IS USED ON THE NIGER AND BENUE RIVERS. THE BODY IS FORMED FROM A HOLLOWED-OUT TREE TRUNK. THE AWNINGS ARE MADE OF PALM BARK AND THE POLES ARE PALM STEMS.

effect in enlisting on the side of the Railway the sympathy and co-operation of the Native Administrations. Thus in January 1924 the Emir of Lafia was accorded the privilege of driving the first train into Lafia station in the presence of the Construction and Political officials, the Elders of the State and throngs of local inhabitants. In July of the same year the independent District Head of South Mada drove the first train over the River Mada bridge in similar state.

There remains to be said a word about recruiting. There were two abuses in particular to which recruiting was liable, which Divisional Officers had to exercise vigilance to prevent. During the course of my service in different divisions supplying railway labour I had occasionally to deal with persons found guilty of both of them.

The first was the substitution of pagan labourers in drafts by professional substitutes. These rogues frightened the pagans by spreading lying reports, and then offered to act as substitutes for a consideration. The substitutes, as soon as the pagans' backs were turned, faded away themselves, complete with the pagans' money.

The second abuse was the demanding of quittance money from villagers to grant them exemption. The policy usually adopted in this matter was that the peasantry should not be prosecuted for payment but that prosecutions should be confined to the recruiters. The peasantry might be practically coerced into paying owing to excessive demands. It could not be argued that Native Administration officials were compelled to accept payment. If the peasantry had been led to

believe that they would be prosecuted for paying exemption money the detection of the evil would have become very difficult, and it would have afforded definite encouragement to unscrupulous native officials.

It will thus be seen that the construction of the way of the land canoe in the former Nasarawa Province was not without its peculiar difficulties—difficulties for the successful surmounting of which it was necessary for all concerned, Political and Railway Government officials equally with their colleagues of the Native Administration both on and behind the lines, to pull their weight together for the attainment of the common goal.

CHAPTER SIX

Keffi

OF the five years during which I served in the Nasarawa (and later Benue) Province I spent the greater part in the Keffi Division.

The division was divided for Administrative purposes into two parts, the Keffi Emirate and the Nasarawa Emirate, each of which was subdivided into six districts.

The circumstances attending the foundation of these emirates by Fulani slave-raiders in the early nineteenth century has already been referred to.

The Native Administration organisation of the emirates was much the same as that of Lafia. At both Keffi and Nasarawa there were the usual two types of Emirate Headquarters Courts, of superior jurisdiction. One, presided over by the Emir with special powers, dealt mostly with political cases or cases beyond the powers of the District Courts. The other, that of the *alkali*, adjudicated chiefly in cases of petty crime and civil claims—mostly in connection with matrimonial causes, debts or administration of estates—such as were constantly arising in the relatively populous and cosmopolitan capitals and their environs.

There was one Native Administration prison for the whole division, at Keffi, and two native treasuries (*Beyut-el-Mal*), one at Keffi and one at Nasarawa. The Provincial Native Administration school, hospital, leper

The Yeskwa District has an approximate area of five hundred and seventy square miles, and is occupied principally by seven tribes—the Yeskwa, Gwandara, Koro Zane (*i.e.* clothed Koro), Koro Funtu (*i.e.* naked Koro), Gbari, Jaba and Hausa. The Yeskwa occupy the north-east portion of the district, the Koro and the Gbari the north-west, and the Gwandara the south, whilst the largest Hausa settlement, Bagaji, is situated in the extreme south of the district. The remaining Hausas and the Jabas live in scattered hamlets.

The topography of the country is varied. The northern portion of the district is enclosed by a broken semicircle of hills, the plains lying at the foot of which are rich in all kinds of vegetation. In the Yeskwa part of the country to the north-east many thousands of oil-palms are under cultivation, which form the source of a considerable portion of the wealth of the inhabitants. In the Koro and Gbari portion of the district to the north-west there are hardly any oil-palms, but Tukurua palms and Afutu grass are found, which provide materials for the local industries of mat and matting bag (*Burma*) making. A small quantity of iron is found in this region, which is locally smelted. The central and southern portions of the district are flat, with the exception of isolated rocks, contain very fertile soil, and are well wooded. The southern portion is now but sparsely inhabited, but it is said to be here that the Gwandara, who now inhabit the central portion, settled before being driven into the hills by slave-raids.

The Gwandara still use the southern portion of the district extensively for their farms, some of the latter extending to within a few miles of the Keffi District

JABA HOUSE-BUILDING

THESE HOUSES ARE OF PECULIAR PATTERN. THE ROOFS OF THE HUTS (ON THE LEFT) MAY BE OF A SLANTING CONICAL SHAPE AND MADE OF PALM POLES AND THATCH, OR MAY BE DOMED OR ELLIPTICAL (AS ON RIGHT) AND MADE ENTIRELY OF MUD.

boundary. The farmers build a temporary dwelling at the scene of their activities during the farming season, which serves them as an occasional sleeping-shelter. Both the northern and southern (as also the central) plains afford pasturage for numerous Fulani nomad cattle during the dry season. At the beginning of the rains these cattle nomads retire northwards.

The country is well watered. The northern amphitheatre is drained by three fairly large rivers, the Konkon, the Panda and the Kuda (local names), which join towards the west centre of the district to form the River Oke. These larger rivers are in turn fed by innumerable small streams which flow down from the hills, many of which, being fed by springs, retain an adequate supply of water during the whole of the dry season. In the south and east the Haderi and the Antau are the largest rivers.

The principal roads—or more accurately bush-paths—and especially the main route to Kagerko through Gitata and Panda, were well cleared, but unsuited at that time to wheeled transport owing to the numerous unbridged rivers and streams.

There were mud-brick rest-houses, for the use of touring Europeans, at the large villages on the main routes, in good repair, but elsewhere one had to rely, according to the season, either on temporary grass-walled structures or on more substantial mud-brick accommodation lent by Village Headmen in their own compounds.

Most of the villages are to-day located on the plains. The Yeskwa, Gwandara, Koro Zane and Gwari lived in the hills until recent years, whither they were originally

driven by slave-raids, but now only the Koro Funtu, who occupy a group of four villages (Kajim, Kubwai, Shinkafa and Kukuri) in the north-west of the district, still remain in the category of hill-dwellers. These villages are very difficult to approach, as the hill-paths are steep and very rough. They have several times in the past been ordered to move down to the plain—the last time some three years prior to my tour—and several times actually came down, only to return to their hill sites shortly afterwards. The elders of Kukuri informed me that their women had complained on these occasions that the plain conditions were unsuitable to the giving of birth, and by threat of desertion had brought pressure on their menfolk to return to the hills. As, however, the Koro Funtu pay their taxes promptly, and obey orders, the disadvantages to the Administration of their hill-top habitat are not as great as they might be. It is, of course, to their own disadvantage that some of them should have to make a several hours' journey to their main farms near the River Konkon owing to their not choosing to build their permanent habitations nearer to them.

One of the first things one has to do in connection with the actual work of assessment is to take a census of the population of each village, differentiating between effective and non-effective members of the community, and persons falling into different economic categories. The method I personally employed in obtaining population statistics was to go round each household—*i.e.* group of compounds inhabited by a single kindred (Hausa = *kabila*)—with the household head. The household head instructed his compound

heads to parade their families in their compound for me to count, and to keep them there until permission was given for them to dismiss. As I went round each compound (Hausa=*gida*) I asked the compound head or his representative to give me particulars of any members of his family not present. It was the duty of the household head who accompanied me to inform me whether the information given me by the various compound heads was correct. To refer to in cases of doubt I had a second senior member of the household waiting outside the precincts of the household, who, as he would not have heard what either the household head or family head had said, would be in a position to make an independent statement. I had not time, of course, to count the whole of the population of the district personally. I had a staff of native scribes to assist me in this. All that it was practicable to do personally was to check a proportion of the work of each scribe before accepting it.

For the purposes of census and assessment the population was divided by sex into adults, children, and old and infirm. The latter category was further subdivided into lepers, blind, lame or otherwise totally disabled. Where representatives of several different tribes inhabited a single village these statistics were further divided up according to nationality. Other general categories were number of whole-time agriculturists, number of part-time agriculturists and part-time industrials, and number of whole-time industrials. The followers of each occupation were separately listed.

All the tribes of the district practise agriculture as a major occupation, and there are two staple cereal crops,

guinea-corn and a type of millet called *atcha*, which are common to all. Other crops which are cultivated fairly extensively by different tribes are *dauro* and *aburu* millet, maize, ground-nuts, yams, cassava and beans. The minor crops include rice, sweet potatoes, tobacco, beni-seed, indigo and onions, in addition to various soup-stuffs. The latter include *gauta* (a small variety of tomato resembling berries) and ochra.

The principal part-time industries practised in the district in combination with agricultural pursuits are those of dyeing, mat-making, matting-bag making, weaving, smithying, tailoring and palm-oil collecting. The chief whole-time industrials are smiths, traders, tailors, butchers, weavers, pedlars and leather-workers.

The average income derivable from each of these occupations in the different villages had to be calculated after detailed inquiries and multiplied by the number of followers of the occupation for the purpose of arriving at the estimated total income from these sources derivable by each village.

Other statistics which had to be obtained in connection with the calculation of the village income were totals of village live stock, including especially sheep, goats, horses, mares, donkeys and cattle; and also rough estimates of numbers of economic trees, principally oil-palms and locust-bean trees, owned by the members of each village.

Various subsidiary sources of income, including poultry, special and minor crops, bee-keeping, spinning, native carpentry and other auxiliary industries, had also to be taken into account.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A Hausa Emirate

THE first Administrative division to which I was posted in charge was that of Abuja.

The division took its name from its capital town, which in turn was called after its founder, Abu Ja (Hausa=Red Abu), named, like William Rufus, after certain physical peculiarities.

Unlike the Lafia and Keffi divisions, which were composed of mutually independent native areas, the Government Administrative unit known as Abuja Division was conterminous with the Native Administration unit known as Abuja Emirate. Owing to the native administration of the whole area thus being centralised in the person of the Emir, the task of control was, from the point of view of the Political Officer in charge, in some ways simplified.

The Abuja Emirate was divided for Administrative purposes into ten districts. The headships of four—those of Abuja, Gerki, Kuje and Pai—were in the gift of the Emir. They were occupied either by members of the ruling Abuja family or trusted and competent members of the Emir's entourage. The headships of the remaining districts were vested in the hereditary chiefs of the tribes conquered by the Hausa (also sometimes called Habeshi or Habe) rulers of Abuja, who had at the time of the conquest been allowed to retain their administrative rights over their own people subject to

good conduct. Of these six districts, two had as rulers members of the Koro tribe; one District Head was a Fulani, one an Arago, one a Ganagana and one a Gbari.

It was an interesting fact that, although more than two-thirds of the population of the emirate was Gbari, yet only one of the ten District Heads and a small minority of the Village Area Heads belonged to this tribe. This was due to the submissive character of the Gbari—to which reference has already been made —which led them to accept the political domination of Koros, whom they almost instinctively regard as their superiors and rulers. The Koros consolidated their position as rulers and paid tribute to and received their appointment from the Hausa rulers of Zaria, who belonged to the Zakzak (also sometimes called Zagizagi, Zugzug or Zauzau) division of the Hausa-speaking people.

When, about a hundred and twenty years ago, the Hausas were driven from Zaria by the Fulani they fled to Zuba, the chief town of their Koro vassals, who still accepted them as their overlords despite their misfortunes, and eventually founded a new kingdom, with Abuja as its capital.

Thus there are three strata, Hausa, Koro and Gbari. The Koro mostly avoided intermarriage with the Gbari, whom they looked upon as their inferiors. The Habe, on the other hand, when driven from Zaria, found that their own women were insufficient for them and freely intermarried with the Koro, Gwandara and Gbari. The so-called Hausa of the present day, therefore, has a large admixture of Gbari blood in him, even though he affects to look down upon the Gbari peasantry, who

make up the greater part of the population of the emirate.

Soon after taking charge of the division I set off on a general Administrative tour of the southern districts of the emirate. I remained on tour for about eight weeks, averaging about twelve miles a day when on the march. My means of transport was a horse for the first twenty miles south of Abuja. The animal had then to be returned to headquarters, since the tsetse-flies, which infest the districts farther south, would have rendered its survival there problematical. For the rest of the journey I had to content myself with the alternatives of shanks' mare and a hammock, the bush-paths being too rough to allow of the use of a cycle.

During the course of this tour a certain number of cases of petty extortion came to light, more especially in remote villages visited off the beaten track, where those responsible had lulled themselves into a sense of false security from the attentions of perambulatory Government officials. They were of the usual sort, concerning individuals passing themselves off for fraudulent purposes as connected with members of the Native Administration or junior native officials abusing their authority.

As a change from such cases I found on arrival at Sabo, the headquarters of the Kuje District, a case of witchcraft awaiting my attention. The trial of cases of witchcraft was within the powers of the District Court, but in view of certain local circumstances I agreed to try this particular case in the presence of the District Court, as a demonstration to the latter.

The accused was a Gbari native named Chache. The

principal witness against him was a young Gbari girl aged twelve, named Kulai.

She stated that about three months ago she had been driven out of her home in the Grusa hamlet of Barayi village by Chache and her fellow-villagers.

Chache was her elder brother by the same mother and father, and since the death of her father had looked after her. The day before she was driven out he came to her and said (in substance): "I have lately been very ill, and I and the rest of the family consider that this illness was due to your being a witch. Further, you have already by your witchcraft killed four other members of the family. We consider that you constitute a danger to our village and we have decided to drive you out of it to-morrow."

She cried, and said she was not a witch, and did not try to bring about the death of her relatives.

The next morning at daybreak a large crowd of people assembled near her house. She was brought out, and Chache said to her: "You must now go out into the bush, away from this town, and never come near us again, for you are a witch and a danger."

Seeing all the people she was afraid, and went away into the bush, crying. That night she slept in the bush. As she had been without any food, and felt hungry, the following day she entered the hamlet of Tuda, where a man, called Jaramai, and his wife took pity on her and gave her food. A day or two later Jaramai told her that a message had arrived from Grusa hamlet to say that she was a witch and disaster would fall on the town if she were allowed to stay.

Jaramai said she would therefore have to go away at

once. He did not drive her away publicly, nor foodless, as her own relatives had done. His wife gave her some provisions to take away with her, and she departed. The provisions lasted her two days, and she was two more days wandering about before she found anyone who would take her in. On the fourth day, as she was very much exhausted, she took courage and entered the house of a Hausa man, named Musa Kano, at Gudeji, who allowed her to stay in his house.

It remains to be said that there was no doubt in my mind that the accused did *bona fide* believe that Kulai was a witch and a danger. In my experience a genuine belief in witchcraft is still very widespread. This, therefore, although not constituting a legal defence to the charge, was taken into consideration in dealing with him.

Another class of crime peculiar to the country, but which is now fast dying out with the spread of sophistication, is known in the vernacular (Hausa) as *sojan gona*. The first word in the phrase is a corruption of the English word "soldier," while the second means "farm." The expression may be translated freely as "imposing on unsophisticated persons under guise of being a Government servant." In the early days of the Administration, before the unsophisticated pagans had become used to European official dress and procedure, it used to be a common thing for a certain class of native to don articles of European dress, and, having armed themselves with any old scrap of paper to represent an official document, to sally forth into the country-side, requisition supplies, and collect tribute and fines in the name of the Government. There is, of course, no

type of offence more calculated to bring the Government into disrepute, and, when detected, cases are accordingly dealt with in an exemplary manner.

The chief offenders in my experience have been detribalised, semi-Europeanised natives from the Southern Provinces, a pathetic and undisciplined type, out of sympathy with and despising their own race, traditions and chiefs, which, it is generally conceded, has arisen largely as the result of the system of Direct Rule and unwisely applied missionary influence, which formerly obtained in the Southern Nigerian Protectorate.

The most flagrant case of *sojan gona* which occurred while I was in Abuja happened as follows. The culprits were three *savvy* natives of the type referred to above, whom I will call Matthew, Joseph and John, English versions of Biblical names not uncommonly used by such persons in preference to their own.

They arrived in Abuja one day, and there persuaded the Market Head, by means of a false representation that they were Government servants in the employ of a technical department, to provide them with accommodation, foodstuffs, wood and water. They left Abuja early the next morning without tendering any payment for their board and lodging, and proceeded along the highroad westwards in the direction of Tuchi, whither they were bound *en route* for Minna.

About eleven o'clock they found themselves close to the small hamlet of Kwakuchi, which is situated about a hundred yards off the main Abuja-Tuchi road. At this time of the day the hamlet was more or less deserted, except for the womenfolk, for most of the able-bodied males were away working on their farms.

GBARI GOOD-LUCK SYMBOLS

THE SYMBOL ON THE CORN-BIN IS SIMILAR TO AN EGYPTIAN TAU CROSS, WHILE THOSE ON EITHER SIDE OF THE ENTRANCE TO THE DWELLING APPEAR TO BE A DOUBLE CROSS AND CIRCLE DEVICE SURMOUNTED BY AN ALPHA AND OMEGA.

"TOWN" FULANI OFFICIALS

MEMBERS OF THE EMIR OF KEFFI'S ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF IN GALA ATTIRE. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, CONFIDENTIAL MESSENGER, VETERINARY STOCK INSPECTOR, VIZIER, COURT SCRIBE

The travellers turned in to the hamlet. Finding the Hamlet Head and another villager at home, they represented to them that they were Government clerks, and that they had been sent ahead by the Divisional Officer, who was on his way to inspect their village.

Masquerading in this guise, and be-trousered, bespectacled and be-hatted to give verisimilitude to their story, they first demanded to be supplied with (native-brewed) beer.

On this being refused they adopted a domineering attitude, apparently with the intention of frightening the villagers by the display of a semblance of authority. They complained of the dirty condition of the hamlet and purported to levy a fine on the inhabitants in the name of the Government.

They obtained part payment of this imposition, Matthew giving the Hamlet Head in exchange a scrap of paper, torn off a larger piece on which he had scribbled what he represented to be an official acknowledgment of receipt. They also demanded fowls, with threats, in the name of the Divisional Officer, finally decamping with their spoil along the Abuja-Tuchi road in the direction of Tuchi.

On arrival at Tuchi the trio asked the Village Head for accommodation, explaining that they had been sent by the Divisional Officer but not mentioning that they had visited Kwakuchi. He gave them lodging in his house.

At daybreak the following morning the Hamlet Head of Kwakuchi and five villagers arrived at Tuchi, having received permission from their District Head to arrest the travellers. As soon as the Kwakuchi men entered the compound of the Village Head of Tuchi, and before

any of them had spoken a word, Matthew and John ran out of the compound. They were followed and caught. The third man, Joseph, was caught on his way to the river with a wash-basin.

At the subsequent trial the defence was that the witnesses for the prosecution were lying against them, and that the extorted money referred to had been handed over in exchange for a shirt, produced in court. The shirt produced was of a European pattern of striped material which the villagers denied ever having seen. It was claimed that, after they had proceeded about a mile beyond the hamlet, a certain number of villagers—how many and whom were not agreed upon or consistently identified by the travellers — overtook them and said that the shirt was a bad bargain. The Hamlet Head was said by one of the trio to have thrown down the shirt on the road and to have demanded his money back. Then, rather than leave the shirt on the road, the deponent picked it up, telling the Sarkin Kwakuchi to follow him to Tuchi, where he proposed to submit the matter to the arbitration of the Village Head of Tuchi.

The accused were found guilty, sentenced to imprisonment, and subjected to whipping and exposure in the stocks in the Abuja market-place.

One did not always, however, as in the cases so far referred to, have to look outside prisons for criminals. Occasionally Native Administration prison warders were detected in actions which resulted in their exchanging their uniforms for those of their charges. Two cases had occurred a few months previous to the conviction of the *masu-sojan gona*.

The head warder and the assistant head warder were accused of being concerned in the stealing of guinea-corn intended for prisoners' food. The case was tried by the Emir's Court, and the head warder sentenced to six months' imprisonment and beaten. The assistant head warder fled on the morning of the discovery, and had not been traced up to the time I left the division. He was also wanted on a further charge, which came to light at the same time, of introducing a prostitute into the prison at the instigation of a prisoner named Abu.

The case was tried by the Emir's Court, and Abu sentenced to a further three months' imprisonment, the woman, named Kasua, being given one month's imprisonment and fined.

There in the position of Tantalus, shackled within talking distance of his paramour but not permitted to visit her, and hoping for better times to come, I will leave him, as also the account of my experiences in Abuja.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Fulani & their Cattle

IT has already been mentioned that the ruling caste in both the Keffi and Nasarawa emirates are Fulani from Katsina, who at the beginning of the nineteenth century established themselves in walled strongholds, whence they warred against and eventually conquered the surrounding tribes.

This military invasion did not represent the first advance of the Fulani to these parts, for nomad Fulani herdsmen had visited the area in search of pasture annually during the dry season for a number of years previously.

To-day, as at the time of their foundation, the Fulani to be found in the Keffi and Nasarawa emirates fall into two main divisions. The first consists of the town or settled Fulani, who form the aristocratic class. They, following the traditions of their ancestors, intermarry freely with the surrounding population and profess the Mohammedan religion. The second comprises the people known to-day as the "Cow" or "Borroro" Fulani. They are nomads, keep their blood pure by marrying only within the tribe and retain for the most part their pagan beliefs. They are recognised by their town brethren as racially akin to themselves, but are regarded by the latter socially as Ishmaelites.

During my service in the Keffi Division I had considerable opportunities of studying the customs of both

groups. But before giving an account of what I saw and heard locally it may be of use to say a word or two concerning the present state of our knowledge concerning the origin and history of the Fulani before they arrived in Nigeria.

Some obscurity, even to-day, surrounds the question of their origin. One of the most recent authoritative opinions on the subject is that expressed by Mr H. R. Palmer in the *Journal of the African Society*, in October 1927. His view is to the effect that they arose in the first place somewhere in the Central Sudan, near Fezzan, as a result of the intermixture of Phœnician colonists from Syria (Tyre) with Wangara women of pre-Tuwareg Berber origin. The same authority considers that their cattle, which are of the humped variety like the Indian zebu—and dissimilar from both the Egyptian cattle with merely a raised spine and the type of cattle found on rock-drawings in the Sahara—may have been originally imported into North Africa from India by sea.

Such an assumption respecting the origin of the people, in so far as it relates to their ancestry on the female side, is by no means inconsistent with the fact that at the present day the Fulani maintain the relationship known as "comradeship-in-sport"—involving a peculiar type of intimacy, which will be described later—with all members of the Wangara and Beriberi (Berber) tribes. The existence of comradeship-in-sport between two tribes cannot be regarded as absolute proof of relationship, but it seems always to arise as a result of a tradition of a long-standing common history.

As regards the word "Fulani," it is probable that the name was given to them, as constituting a foreign

"white" element, by the Berbers. The word means "red," but the Hausas to-day call us more often *ja* (red) than *fari* (white).

According to their own tradition, as recorded, for example, by Abdulahi dan Fodio in the *Tazinu el Warakati*, the Fulani, as is often the case with half-breeds, "spoke the language of their mother," but "they did not know the language of their father."

From some cause or another the Fulani gradually migrated westwards from their place of origin, until they reached the Atlantic coast in the hinterland of Morocco. One may guess that their exodus from Fezzan may have been partly due to their neighbours despising them as half-breeds and their becoming estranged from their father's relatives on account of their speaking a different language; or climatic conditions, such as the increased dryness of their original habitat, may have influenced their departure.

In their new home they became more firmly welded together, began to acquire learning and developed a national spirit. As they increased in numbers, learning and power they spread out to the south and west. They entered Northern Nigeria in the thirteenth century via Senegal, in which they are said to have settled as early as the sixth.

For a long time after their arrival in Northern Nigeria they wielded little political power, owing to their being widely scattered. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the settled Fulani, who had embraced Mohammedanism, became sufficiently powerful, under the headship of Uthman dan Fodio, to declare a holy war against all the neighbouring tribes. Within

a few years they conquered nearly all the country between Kano in the north and the Niger and Benue rivers to the south.

During the period of these political changes the non-Muslim Fulani continued their nomad life, being content to let their settled neighbours look after the government and military operations, so long as they were left in peace to follow their pastoral pursuits.

So aloof, in fact, have the Cow Fulani held themselves from affairs right up to the present time that until very recently but little was known, or at least had been recorded, concerning their traditions, customs or beliefs.

In these circumstances an official request was circulated to the effect that as much information as possible should be obtained concerning them before the impact of alien civilisations should modify them or cause them to be forgotten; and it was in response to this request that I undertook the inquiries, the result of which I have recorded in the present and following chapters.

The first subject concerning which I sought information was the existence or otherwise among them of legends of origin and of the origin of their cattle. I found several variations, according to whether I made inquiries concerning the origin of the Borroro (Cow) Fulani from themselves or from the settled (Town) Fulani, or vice versa.

In judging of the value of these various traditions it seems reasonable to suppose that the different groups should have inherited more reliable traditions concerning themselves than concerning their neighbours. At the same time it is evident from the stories that the

substratum of historical truth in the traditions, as maintained by the groups to which they refer, has been much altered and added to from motives of pride.

Thus the Muslim Fulani usually trace their ancestry from the Prophet Muhammad, or one of the earlier prophets, Jacob, son of Israel, and Jesus, son of Mary, often being brought in. Some Muslim genealogies, again, start from a Yemenite general named Ukba bin Amir, who took part in the war in Syria and brought news of the capture of Damascus to the Caliph Umar, between A.D. 630 and 640. He is represented as marrying a woman of Africa.

In non-Muslim legends Okba seems to become Yakubu or Ukuba, who fled from his country in the days of the Prophet Muhammad and became the father in a strange land of children who did not speak his language.

Some of the Borroros, no doubt influenced by the legends of their Muslim neighbours, trace their origin, as in the above example, to the time of the Prophet—though they probably have no clear idea as to when he lived—and their place of origin to Mecca, though they deny any connection of their ancestors with Islam.

That the Cow Fulani, who keep their blood pure by marrying only within their tribe, are a very different people from their negroid neighbours is evident enough from their physical appearance. The men have a well-developed cranium, straight or slightly wavy hair, narrow fine-nostrilled noses, often aquiline, and relatively thin lips. They are wiry in form and have usually light copper or bronze complexions. Correspondingly distinctive are the Fulani women, with their fair skin,

FROM MARKET

A HAUSA GIRL RETURNING WITH PROVISIONS FOR THE HOUSEHOLD.

TO MARKET

A HAUSA WOMAN CARRYING HOME-GROWN CALABASHES TO MARKET FOR SALE.

rounded breasts, large eyes, antimony-dyed eyebrows, grace of movement, beauty of form, coquettish ways and general attractiveness.

It will be seen that to account for their whiter complexion in comparison with their settled Fulani neighbours, who freely intermarry with the surrounding negroid tribes, the Borroro tradition postulates a white-skinned water-spirit as their paternal ancestor while supposing the other branch of the tribe to have been born of the same mother by a different father.

The following is the legend, as obtained by me from the elders of a small group of nomad cattle-owners belonging to the Shuwalbe clan of the Borroro Fulani, who had established their wet-season camp near Kurafi, in Keffi Emirate.

In the days of the Prophet Muhammad there lived at Mecca a certain Yakubu, of whom it was prophesied that he would become the progenitor of a race who would not understand Arabic. Fearing the fulfilment of the prophecy, and the presumed consequent wrath of the Prophet, Yakubu fled from Arabia with his wife, Bajemongo, at that time pregnant, and his younger brother to Melle. (From here, incidentally, it is known that some Fulani teachers came to Bornu in the middle of the thirteenth century.) At Melle, Bajemongo gave birth first to a daughter, who remained dumb for three years, and afterwards to a son. One day, when Bajemongo was outside her house washing, the male child started to cry. Thereupon his sister, who had hitherto been regarded as dumb, went up to him and soothed his cries, speaking in a language (Fulani) understood by the boy but not by Bajemongo, but which she subsequently

learned meant: "Be quiet! Your mother will soon return to comfort you." Both Bajemongo and Yakubu perceived the prophecy had come true, and Yakubu decided that it was incumbent on him to return to Mecca. Before he left, Yakubu gave Bajemongo permission to remarry, but cautioned her to marry no one but a modest man. He defined a modest man as one who should pass below her in the street—she being stationed on the flat roof of her house—on the way to relieve nature, and who should squat for that purpose in a place not visible to her from her roof. All who were so immodest as to squat within her view were ineligible.

The only man who fulfilled this condition was Yakubu's younger brother. Soon after Yakubu's departure, news of his death on the road was received, and Bajemongo then married his younger brother, by whom she had two more sons who spoke only Fulani. Soon after the birth of her last son, Bajemongo's husband said he must leave her to visit the grave of Yakubu. After his departure she was washing herself one day close to a river, near Melle, when a man came out from the depths of the river and seized and ravished her. She conceived and bore a son. The same thing happened a second time, and she bore a second son. The appearance of the father of these two sons is described as white-skinned like a European, and having the sides of the face and upper lip covered with hair as well as having a beard. The hair of the head was long, falling over the shoulders, and was slightly curly.

The two sons of the river-spirit were given a bad time by the other sons of Bajemono, who derided them for not having a father who had either named

them or given them riches. Bajemongo appealed at the river-side to have this state of affairs remedied. As a result the water-spirit appeared in public and named the children. Later he brought out twenty-two cattle (twenty cows and two bulls) and two male slaves and two female slaves from the river and divided them equally between the two boys.

The cattle are said to have been brought out in the following order: black (*baleji*), given to the elder brother; white (*gudali*), given to the younger brother; red (*budeji*), given to the elder brother; black and white (*bunaji*), given to the younger brother; white and red (*shagiri*), given to the elder brother; and hartebeest -colour cattle (*yelaji*), given to the younger brother.

Such is the account given of the origin of the Borroro Fulani's cattle and of their own descent from the two sons of the water-spirit.

Their four half-brothers were the ancestors of the settled Fulani. The latter, according to the same account, intermarried freely with the Melle women; but not so the Borroros, who are regarded by Shuwalbe tradition as having remained practically endogamous from the time of Bajemongo to the present day.

According to another version of the above story the son of the water-spirit was seven years old when he asked his mother concerning his father's name. Bajemongo took her son to the river to see the water-spirit, who told the boy to make seven piles of wood and light them, but on no account to look round. The cattle then appeared at six of the piles, but the boy looked round at the seventh and saw the queen of the cattle disappearing in the water. His father then said to him that had

he not been disobedient all white races would have had cattle, but on account of his act some would now be without. The water-spirit, whose name was Fu, led the boy away from the river, followed by the cattle. After a time he halted, instructed his son to light a fire and then dived down an ant-hill. And that is why cattle will put their horns into an ant-heap, and when lying on the ground you can hear them sniff and call "*Fu, Fu, Fu!*"

Other details of the tradition are said to explain why, if a newly born calf is allowed to go near a river at night, it will return to its original home in the water; and also why it is considered necessary for a fire to be lit at sundown in the cattle enclosure, no matter how few the cattle.

Another version of the Fu story was given me by the elders of a cattle community whom I found pasturing in the neighbourhood of Biti, in the Keffi District, and who described themselves as belonging to the Rehazawa clan of the Borroros. According to this tradition all the Fulani were at first tenders of cattle, but later split into "Town" and "Cow" groups. This version states that the Fulani ancestors originally possessed no cattle themselves, but tended herds belonging to the Beriberi (Berbers) of Bornu. The names of the tenders of these herds are given as Yakubu and his boy, Fu (or Hu). During the reign of a chief named Shehu, Shehu counselled Yakubu to steal the cattle from the Beriberi owners. So, when the latter were absent, Yakubu and he ran off with their herds. Soon after their departure from Bornu rain came down in torrents, and continued for two nights.

Both got soaked in spite of the *kabidos* (grass-cloaks) which they were wearing. When the rain stopped they took off their *kabidos*, and, having come to rest near some rocky ground, were minded to light a fire with the aid of tinder.

The tinder, however, was taken away by the cattle, and this so enraged Yakubu that he said to his boy, Hu: "You can stay with the cattle if you like, but, as for me, I am tired of the thankless brutes and intend to leave them." So they split up, Yakubu forsaking the nomadic in favour of the settled life and Hu continuing his pastoral pursuits. Later the descendants of Yakubu came under the influence of the Mohammedan religion in the towns and were converted, but the descendants of Hu, who were the Borroro Fulani, retained their pagan customs and beliefs.

It would appear that this story, in which the ancestor of the Borroros is shown in a relatively contemptuous light compared with the ancestors of the settled Fulani, may well have been invented by the latter and have been heard from my informants or their ancestors from their settled neighbours. This view is borne out by the rather curious circumstance that when I interrogated some of the leading members of the Keffi ruling caste of Katsina Fulani—who belong to the Yegomawa clan of settled Fulani—the "cattle-in-the-rain" story was well known to them, but no one had previously heard of the tradition concerning the rape of Bajemongo by the water-spirit.

This fact seems also to emphasise the remarkable state of aloofness from the towns in which the Cow Fulani hold themselves — an aloofness which has

rendered it possible for them to maintain a social organisation and set of social ceremonies and traditions differing fundamentally from those of their settled aristocratic neighbours, as will be shown in the following chapters.

CHAPTER NINE

Marriage & Family Conventions

BOTH the "Town" and the "Cow" Fulani are divided into numerous clans, but, with very minor exceptions, the essential beliefs and customs of the different clans do not differ from other clans of the same group.

In the Keffi and Nasawara emirates the ruling caste of settled Fulani, who were my principal informants in regard to Muslim "Town" customs, belong to the Yegomawa clan. Most of the information which I obtained concerning the practices of the pagan Borroros was derived from members of the Shuwalbe clan of the "Cow" Fulani, who were pasturing at the time I made my inquiries in the Kurafi District of the Keffi Emirate, south-west of Keffi.

The Shuwalbe stated that they had in previous years pastured their cattle in the emirates of Kano and Bornu. There, no doubt, they would have come into contact with Wangara and Beriberi, the members of which tribes, as will be seen, are "comrades-in-sport" with the Shuwalbe.

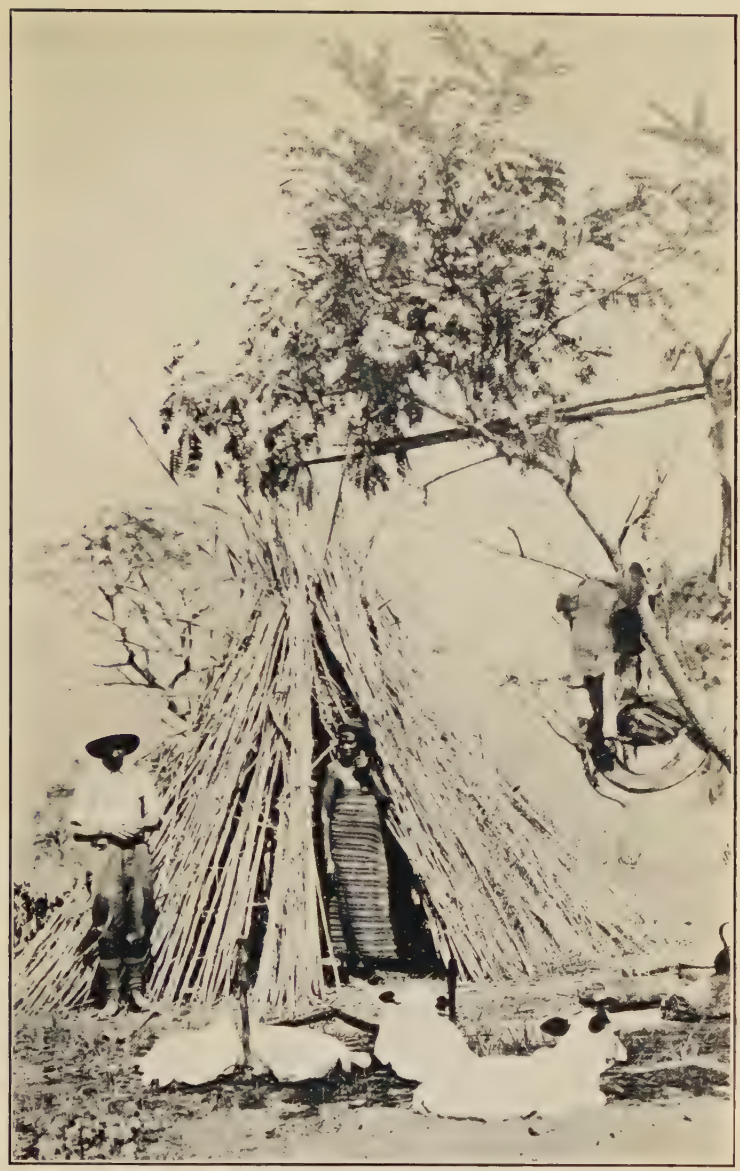
The dwellings of the Shuwalbe are of the usual grass-and-stick shelter type common to cattle nomads, of beehive shape, from about ten to twenty huts forming an average-sized camp (*ruga*).

The cattle enclosures consist of a fence (*zariba*) of thorns, into which the cattle are herded at night as a protection against wild animals.

Their chief staple food is milk, but unlike some other pastoral peoples they do not appear to practise any milking rites.

In connection with my inquiries concerning their social organisation — and, in particular, the mode of regulating marriage among them—I first sought information as to any animal or plant observances or taboos, with a view to determining if there was any recognition of totems among them. The answers to my inquiries, which are to be found in detail in my "Notes on the Borroro Fulani" in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (1927), did not suggest the existence of a system of clan totems. They pointed, however, to the possibility of the present or former existence of a tribal totemistic belief in descent from cattle, as also to a belief, recalling that of Adam and Eve, as recorded in the Book of Genesis, in a talking serpent (named Gajimare) closely associated with the concepts of procreation and fertility.

Had a system of clan totems existed among the Borroros, on the lines, *e.g.*, of that which obtains among the Kwottos of the Nasarawa Emirate—whose social organisation will be described later—one might have expected it to have gone hand in hand with a sentiment in favour of clan exogamy or marriage outside the clan, as among the Kwottos. The reverse, however, was found to apply, for among the Shuwalbe there is a strong sentiment in favour of endogamous marriages, or marriages inside the clan or group. This of course does not prevent a certain number of individuals marrying outside the group, but with the following exceptions such marriages are viewed with definite disfavour.



A "COW" FULANI'S DWELLING

THE DWELLINGS OF THE "COW" FULANI ARE OF THE GRASS AND STICK SHELTER TYPE, OF BEEHIVE SHAPE, FROM ABOUT TEN TO TWENTY HUTS FORMING AN AVERAGE-SIZED CAMP (*ruga*). THE MAN SHOWN IS NOT A FULANI.

The first exception is that no disgrace attaches to a Shuwalbe woman marrying a Beriberi man. The reason given is that the Beriberi were the protectors of the Fulani when they were in Bornu, and while they were there a certain Shehu (or Sultan) of Bornu married as his first wife a Fulani woman. A Shuwalbe woman will, however, in such circumstances, be liable to good-natured chaff from her relatives, who will twit her, saying (in effect): "You have now elected to return to the former status of the Shuwalbe as slaves of the Beriberi, have you?" It is an understood thing that if a Shuwalbe woman obtains a divorce from a Beriberi husband he will not be entitled to the return of the espousal fee. It is not considered a fitting thing, however, for a Shuwalbe man to marry a Beriberi woman. The Beriberi are comrades-in-sport with the Shuwalbe, but, on the other hand, so are the Wangara, between whom and the Shuwalbe marriages are not favoured.

Marriages between one clan of Borroro Fulani and another (*e.g.* between a Shuwalbe and a member of the Rehazawa, Dundumawa, Bodi, or Jandakwae clans) are not considered shameful, but are not favoured.

Marriages between the Shuwalbe and the "Town" Fulani, on the other hand, are looked on with disfavour. It is argued that, since the latter put the love of fine clothing and town luxuries before the love of cattle, the infiltration of these ideas among the exclusively cattle-loving groups through the agency of mixed marriages might tend to wean the minds of the weak away from the practice of the time-honoured customs of their forefathers.

In the exceptional case where a very rich *mai-ruga*

(chief of nomad herdsmen) has grown old and is childless, although married to women of his own clan or group, public opinion allows him to marry a woman of a neighbouring group or tribe in the hopes of raising up seed to succeed to his property. But this would not usually be done without first obtaining the permission of the local chief priest (*gumeji*) of the group.

The Shuwalbe pride themselves on having maintained their tradition of endogamous marriage more strictly than some other groups of Borroro. Thus it is said that the Shuwalbe never adopted the practice of keeping slave concubines. This custom is openly objected to by the pure-blooded Shuwalbe women generally, although, it is said, not by the Yegomawa (settled Fulani) women, who are themselves of mixed stock. Further, the Shuwalbe claim they never allowed their slaves to inherit the wives or property of their masters, which, it is said, the Dundumawa permitted. In isolated cases a Shuwalbe man might take a " black " concubine, but any son of the union might not marry a full-blooded Fulani girl. The commonest reason which operates to cause the occasional taking of " black " concubines is said to be that Fulani girls are often married before they are really nubile. The husband becomes tired of them, and resorts instead to the more sensuous concubines. A Shuwalbe man marrying a " black " woman becomes a social outcast.

That form of marriage known as the senior levirate is practised by both " Town " and " Cow " Fulani—that is to say, a man normally inherits the wives of his elder brother. But marriage with the wives of a deceased younger brother is prohibited.

Sororate marriage, or marriage of sisters, is also permitted by both groups, in the sense that, on the death of a wife who has been on good terms with her husband, her relatives will usually agree that her younger sister, if unmarried, should marry the bereaved husband. Marriage with a deceased wife's elder sister is not allowed.

The most favoured type of marriage among the Shuwalbe is that of patrilineal cross-cousins (*i.e.* of a man or woman with his or her father's sister's child). Next in favour comes marriage between patrilineal ortho-cousins (*i.e.* of a man or woman with his or her father's brother's child). That form of cross-cousin marriage by which a man marries the daughter of his mother's brother, although not forbidden, is definitely looked on with disfavour. For it tends to destroy the solidarity of the patrilineal group, which marriage with the daughter of the father's sister or father's brother tends, on the other hand, to cement. In this they differ from the Keffi Yegomawa Fulani, among whom the "best marriage" for a man is considered to be one with his mother's brother's daughter.

Granddaughter marriage—using the term "granddaughter" in the classificatory sense (*i.e.* including grand-nieces)—is not practised by the Shuwalbe, being regarded by them as incestuous. This view is not held by the Keffi Yegomawa Fulani, who allow this type of marriage. There were two well-known members of the Keffi ruling family in Keffi when I was there who were married to, and had children by, their granddaughters, which offspring were thus at the same time both their children and their great-grandchildren. I gathered,

however, that other members of the family in question looked somewhat askance at the perpetrators of these singular accomplishments.

The custody of children and the prerogative of punishing them are, among the Shuwalbe, in the hands of their actual father, and not, as among the Keffi Yegomawa Fulani, in the hands of the father's brother. An uncle may on occasion take it upon himself to correct his brother's children, but his continual interference would not be tolerated. Interference with children by the mother's relatives is not allowed.

There is an interesting difference in view between the two groups on the subject of intimacy between uncles and nephews. A Shuwalbe youth may expect much petting and receiving of presents from his father's brother, but not from his mother's brother. The latter acts on the principle that, as his sister's son does not owe him personally any direct allegiance, he will not go out of his way to help him, and therefore he may as well be ignored. The Keffi Yegomawa Fulani, on the other hand, make a greater fuss of their sister's son than of their brother's son. They say that, as the sister's son will not receive any inheritance from his mother's brother, the latter may as well pet the child and give it presents, as it were, in compensation.

Divorce among the Mohammedan Fulani is, of course, regulated according to Muslim law, which gives the husband the right to divorce his wife with practically no ceremony and for no cause, the only check being that he will have to pay her her dowry, which, possibly, he may still owe. The wife can obtain divorce if she is denied her marital rights, which include the right of

sexual congress and the provision of adequate food and clothing.

Among the Shuwalbe a girl who has been affianced may, at any time before she leaves her parents' house, exercise the right of refusal. If she does, the party eventually marrying her has to make compensation to the relatives of the suitor who originally bore the cost of the cattle slaughtered at the betrothal ceremony, in addition to paying the relatives of his fiancée an espousal fee in cattle. In such circumstances it is said that a disappointed fiancé will usually regard it as dishonourable to retain the compensation offered. He will hand it over instead to the relatives of his former betrothed.

Aspirants to the hand of divorcées, no matter whether or not their marriage has been consummated, are almost invariably made to pay a relatively high espousal fee. For example, from seven to twelve head of cattle may be demanded. This custom is designed, it is said, to deter potential wife-stealers from seeking the hand of girls already espoused, by making it so much cheaper for them to marry unattached virgins. The latter procedure, as will be explained, involves but the cost of two head of cattle to be slaughtered on the betrothal day.

After a woman has been divorced there is no period of purification to be undergone before remarriage, such as is in theory compulsory under Muslim law in the case of the Mohammedan Fulani. The Yegomawa in practice often ignore this provision of the Koranic law; and the fact of the non-observance of the period of *iddat* is sometimes brought up long afterwards by a rival lover in an attempt to get a marriage entered into without it annulled.

Adulterous intercourse with a married woman is regarded both by "Town" and "Cow" Fulani as a criminal act (subject to certain provisos mentioned below) and not as a civil cause, as among us. In former times it often led to organised raids by the husband's group on the paramour's group. The husband received no blame from his own relatives if he killed the paramour, so that a blood-feud sometimes resulted. Such a violent treatment of adultery, however, seems to have been confined to aggravated cases of the type which would amount in English law to rape or to cases in which the husband detected the paramour in the act of seducing his wife.

Side by side with the social sanction accorded to direct action in extreme cases, there appears to have existed among both the Shuwalbe and the Keffi Yegomawa a well-recognised custom of wife-stealing. Any man who could successfully seduce another's wife to his house *ipso facto* divorced her from her former husband and married her himself. The crime lay in the paramour being sufficiently incautious to be intercepted by an enraged husband before reaching the sanctuary of his own house. Among the Yegomawa the custom has been, to my personal knowledge, in recent years taken judicial notice of by the Emir of Keffi, it being held not to be a defence against a charge of creating a disturbance for a Yegomawa man to say that he entered a co-respondent's house in a rage. On the other hand, had he created a disturbance on finding the co-respondent with his wife close to his (the husband's) house, that circumstance would very likely have been taken into account in his favour.

The organisation of the Fulani family, and in particular the position which women and children hold in it, was another subject I investigated. The way I set about studying this was to compare the terms used in addressing certain relatives and also the avoidances practised in relation to them among the Shuwalbe on the one hand and the Yegomawa on the other.

I found, for example, that among the Shuwalbe a child calls its father by his birth-name; whereas among the Yegomawa it is the invariable practice for a child to address this relative by a term of respect, "*Babba*" (*lit.* "big one"). Father's brothers are addressed, by both peoples, not by their birth-names but by a term of respect. Among both, the mother is usually addressed by her children as "*Inna*" ("mother"), although the practice of calling her by her birth-name or an affectionate abbreviation of it is also fairly common. The greater familiarity in the form of addressing a father among the Shuwalbe is, perhaps—paradoxical as it may seem from a European standpoint—partly to be explained by the fact that a Shuwalbe father looks after his own offspring; whereas a Yegomawa father hands over his children to the care of his elder brother, or, if he is not available, to his younger brother, or some other relative, for their upbringing.

Elder and younger brothers and sisters (as also elder and younger male and female cousins) are normally addressed by a Shuwalbe by their birth-names. A Yegomawa, however, is obliged always to address an elder brother or sister by a term of respect—e.g. "*Yaya*," which may be translated "elder one." Conversely, an elder brother or sister, both among the Shuwalbe and

Yegomawa, address their juniors familiarly by their birth-names. An exception arises where the young person happens to have the same birth-name as a relative belonging to a senior generation. In this event he or she is addressed by the same term of respect as that used towards the elder relative. Thus a younger brother bearing the same name as a man's grandfather is addressed by him as "grandfather."

The social observances between husband and wife among the Shuwalbe and the Yegomawa reflect a considerable difference in outlook. A Shuwalbe husband does not normally address any of his wives by their birth-names, but by a title indicating "mother-of-the-house," "bride," or the like, or by a nickname. A wife, similarly, avoids addressing her husband by his birth-name. Fellow-wives call each other by their birth-names, irrespective of seniority. A first wife has no special authority over subsequent wives. A husband desiring to make a present of, say, food to each of his wives makes his presentations to each individually and not through the first wife to the others. A husband spends two nights with each wife in turn.

It is considered unmanly for a Shuwalbe husband to eat his food in the presence of his wives. It is usual for the men to eat their food together in one part of the camp, and for the women, after preparing their menfolk's food and taking it to them, to do likewise in their own huts with their young children and the other womenfolk. Each wife cooks every day for her husband, and he must partake of the food brought by each of his wives; otherwise displeasure would be inferred.

Among the Yegomawa, as among the Shuwalbe,

husband and wife avoid addressing each other by their birth-names. Contrary to the usage of the Shuwalbe, however, junior wives among the Yegomawa have also to avoid calling senior wives by their birth-names. They have to address them by the same term of respect used to an elder sister ("*Yaya*"). For among them the first wife is in a privileged position and has authority over all subsequent wives. Consequently a husband desiring to make a presentation of, say, food to each of his wives commonly gives it to the first wife to distribute to the others. Among them a husband spends three nights with each wife in turn.

Among the Yegomawa it is not considered unmanly for a man to eat his meals in the presence of his wives; on the contrary, in the absence of guests it is common practice. Each wife takes it in turn to cook her husband's food. The wife who prepares the food on a given day spends the night with her husband on that day.

CHAPTER TEN

Associations & Festivals

THE part played by the chief actors in Fulani festivals is determined by the sociological relationship they bear to each other. The principal types of associations among the Shuwalbe are of three kinds—namely, those based on purely kinship factors; those of "age-mates" (*saoi*); and those of "comrades-in-sport" (*abokanen wasa*). The form of association between strangers known as blood-brotherhood, which flourishes, for example, among the Kwottos, appears to be unknown.

Age-mate association is of great importance in determining the relations between the sexes. Boys who have been circumcised at about the same time as each other are regarded as age-mates. Girls about two years younger than the boys of a given age-class are regarded as age-mates of the boys.

A custom of permitting an element of sexual laxity, or in other words condoning sexual "play" or intercourse, between age-mates still within the years of childhood—whether married or betrothed or not—at certain festivals exists at the present day among the pagan Borroros, but not among the Muslim Fulani.

This attitude of tolerance is in accordance with the general view which seems to prevail among the "Cow" Fulani that it is idle to attempt to stamp out sexual irregularities among very young people by a policy of

repression. But the practice in its historical aspect may also represent a survival of a former custom of religious prostitution before marriage analogous to that which prevailed in pre-Christian times in many parts of Western Asia. According to the latter, as recorded by Sir J. G. Frazer in *The Golden Bough*,[1] every woman, whether rich or poor, had at least once in her life, usually before marriage, to submit to the embraces of a stranger and dedicate the wages earned by this sanctified harlotry to the great Mother Goddess, the giver of fertility and patroness of love.

The years of childhood of girls for the purpose of the Fulani custom are regarded as terminating about one year from the date of their reaching marriageable age, or, roughly, from the date on which members of their age-class start to give birth. Boys enter an age-class (*i.e.* immediately after circumcision) when they are about two years older than the girls regarded as their age-mates.

From the above it follows that the first child of a newly married wife may conceivably sometimes be the product of these relations and not the child of its legal father, especially since the early commencement of sexual relations between a newly married bride and her husband is regarded as bad form. The normal conditions of Shuwalbe early married life would, indeed, seem to favour the existence of more than a doubt as to the physical fatherhood of the woman's first child. For it is said to be a common occurrence for a young bride newly arrived in her husband's camp several times to run away and be returned by her parents; and several times to be found consorting with her

age-mates of the opposite sex—more especially on festal occasions such as the Gani festival, on which occasions the husband is not allowed by custom to separate his young wife from her youthful adulterer.

But for a husband to decline to accept a child as his own, on the ground that he knew it to be the child of one of his age-mates, in the above circumstances, is said to be almost unknown. And for a husband to divorce his wife for known irregularities during her first year of marriage is also rare.

The instability of the newly married life of young people among the Shuwalbe is given as the reason for a large espousal fee not being demanded, for were such given, her parents and paramours might all be liable to be bothered by the husband for the payment of compensation.

The practice of permitting sexual licence on the above occasions between juvenile age-mates is, however, strictly confined to members of the same age-class. The boy who plays with a girl of a senior age-class to himself is liable to punishment for disrespect at the hands of the members of his senior age-class, and for rough handling on account of such an offence he will have no redress.

Adult married women are not at the present day allowed licence with their age-mates, or with anyone else, but it would appear from the custom described below that the practice of allowing sexual licence between age-mates was in former times not confined to the youth of the tribe, but extended to age-mates of all ages.

The custom in question is one observed among the

Shuwalbe between an age-mate and a fellow age-mate's wife, to which a somewhat similar custom has been recorded among the cattle-owning Masai of East Africa. A married man, on being visited by a fellow age-mate, is expected by Shuwalbe etiquette to invite his visitor into the presence of his (the host's) wife with these words: "Behold your wife. She will bring you food." The host is then expected to leave his guest with his wife and retire to another hut, not returning until his guest has finished his meal in his wife's hut. Contrary to what has been reported as the practice among the Masai, the words of the above invitation are not regarded by the Shuwalbe as constituting, or ever having constituted, an invitation to his guest to have relations with his wife, such a contingency being considered unthinkable in the circumstances. In spite of the denials of my informants, however, the evidence seems to point to the possibility of the custom to this day found among the nomad cattle Masai having at one time also existed among the nomad cattle Fulani.

Turning to the third type of Fulani association, comradeship-in-sport (*abutar wasa*), or playmateship, as it is sometimes called, is a widespread Sudanic institution. The relationship, on the one hand, imposes an obligation of mutual aid and friendship on the parties, which manifests itself, for example, in the frequent giving of presents to each other. On the other hand it allows of considerable familiarity and practical joking between comrades, especially on the occasion of the New Year festival, often far beyond the limits of what would be tolerated from non-comrades.

Among the Shuwalbe the playmate relationship subsists between a man and his patrilineal grandparents, his patrilineal cross-cousins, and his elder brother's wife, and to a more limited extent between a man and his matrilineal grandparents, his matrilineal cross-cousins, his wife's younger brother, his wife's younger sister's husband, the husband of a younger daughter (but not if the daughter is one of the three eldest children of the family), and the wife of his younger son.

In addition to the above relatives, all members of the Shuwalbe group of Borroro Fulani are comrades-in-sport with all members of the Beriberi and Wangara tribes, as also with the Jukuns. The playmateship between the Shuwalbe and these tribes leads to some peculiar observances.

For example, a characteristic form of practical joke allowed to be practised by either a Beriberi man or woman on a Shuwalbe man or woman at the expense of the other, at any time of the year, is as follows. If either sees the other wearing a gown, or cloth, any part of which has been burned, the comrade may seize the wearer and forcibly strip him or her of the cloth. He will then hold it to ransom, not returning it until the wearer has assumed an attitude of humiliation, prayed for forgiveness, and paid a fine to his comrade of a small sum, say, sixpence.

Although joking actions of this nature may in theory be carried out at any time of the year, the season, *par excellence*, for practical joking is the New Year, which falls in the Fulfulde (Fulani) month of Haram Harandero. Two of the features of the New Year celebrations, as will be seen, are torchlight processions

and fights by young men. It is conceivable that, under such conditions, gowns could become burned; and it would seem likely that the origin of the Shuwalbe-Beriberi joke in connection with burned gowns is to be sought in the occurrences at this festival.

Another form of practical joke which the Beriberi may perform at the expense of a Shuwalbe, but not vice versa, is that he may demand a small sum of money (*kurdin shara*) from his Shuwalbe comrade during the last month of the old year. If he meets a comrade who has not paid him his present by the last day of the year he may rub the Shuwalbe's head in ashes, as a jocular reminder of the fact; but by doing so he forfeits his claim to his present.

The fact that Shuwalbe women may marry Beriberi men but not vice versa has already been referred to.

One of the jokes which may be perpetrated by a Wangara man or woman at the expense of a Shuwalbe man or woman, but not vice versa, consists in the throwing by the former at the latter of a large frog (*bududugi*). On the Shuwalbe starting in fright, the Wangara may pursue him and catch hold of him, not letting him go till he has paid a small sum as a ransom.

A Wangara woman seeing a Shuwalbe woman place some property of small value—say, a bowl of milk—on the ground may seize and confiscate it at any time of the year. A Shuwalbe woman, on the other hand, may relieve a Wangara woman of some trifle of hers—say, a calabash of corn—and go off with it.

It is to be noted that the comradeship association between the Shuwalbe and Wangara does not extend

to the permitting of marriage between them, as it does within certain limits in the case of the Beriberi. The reason assigned is that the Shuwalbe regard the Wangara as coming almost into the category of butchers. People who butcher are, in the view of the Shuwalbe, necessarily anathema to cattle herdsmen, who would rather die than make a practice of killing their cattle.

The existence of a playmate relationship between relatives manifests itself in various ways. One of the most striking is to be found in the privileges possessed by a girl over her male cousins, a union with one of whom, as already mentioned, constitutes the "best marriage" for a girl. At the New Year festival girls sometimes throw ropes round their male cousins and demand ransom, for they say: "Are not all boys the slaves of their female cousins?"

An interesting contrast to this Fulani custom is provided by the practice of the Panda Kwottos—whose customs will later be described—who on a similar occasion perpetrate a similar sort of joke on their husband's sister's sons (by whom they are normally inherited). For, they say: "Are not all husband's sister's sons the slaves of the wives of their mother's brothers?" Among the Kwottos undue familiarity between cousins (who are for them ineligible as mates) is considered bad form.

It is interesting to consider whether the playmate relationship existing among the Fulani between cousins can throw any light on the reason for the existence of the somewhat similar relationship between the Fulani and the Beriberi tribes. Since it is the children of the women who collect ransom from their mother's brother's

children on joking occasions, and since it is the Fulani who pay the Beriberi the *kurdin shara* (festival money) at the New Year festival, it would appear that a Fulani girl may have married a Beriberi man.

This in fact is borne out by Fulani tradition in the reason assigned for the custom which allows a Shuwalbe woman to marry a Beriberi man but not vice versa. This is that the Beriberi were at one time the protectors of the Fulani, when they were in Bornu, and during that period a certain Shehu of Bornu married as his first (*i.e.* principal) wife a Fulani woman.

Another explanation, however, given by some Fulani as the reason for their paying the Beriberi playful ransoms is quite different. According to this version the cattle now belonging to the Fulani were originally stolen by them from the Beriberi owners. As a slight recompense for this, when a Fulani meets a Beriberi abroad, he gives him a small present.

The above brief description of the Fulani types of association will assist the reader to appreciate the local significance of Fulani conduct at the time of their seasonal festivals.

The two chief festivals observed by the Shuwalbe are the Gani festival, held in the Fulfulde (Fulani) month of Gani, and the New Year or Shara festival, held in the month of Haram Harandero. The latter is known also as the Wowo festival, from the *wowo* (torches) used during certain of the ceremonies.

I have had the privilege of being present at both these festivals, and have witnessed the greater part of the ceremonies peculiar to each. At these festival times, in addition to the dances and feasting peculiar to the

festival, *Shero* contests and displays of wrestling and boxing often take place.

At a *Shero* ceremony Fulani youths voluntarily undergo severe thrashings at the hands of their age-mates, in order to demonstrate publicly their manly qualities of courage and endurance. In former times it is said that this ordeal of flagellation had to be successfully passed by every youth of the tribe before he might be considered a man and eligible to marry. A girl already engaged to a youth who shirked or failed in this Spartan test would consider such cowardice as sufficient cause for breaking off the engagement. To-day a youth who does not submit to the *Shero* ordeal can usually obtain a wife, but loses prestige.

During a *Shero* ceremony the marriageable girls and young men form an inner ring round the space chosen for the *Shero*, while the rest of the spectators form an outer ring. The young men attract attention by shaking a thin stick about a foot long with some thirty pieces of calabash, each about the size of a florin, threaded upon it. This they hold out horizontally in front of them with both hands and rattle it to and fro. In the centre the youth who is to undergo the ordeal stands stripped except for the leather kilt, ornamented with cowries, proper to the occasion, and prepares to receive a lash from some unknown quarter. The tester, an age-mate belonging to a different family, circles round the tester armed with a strong thin stick smoke-toughened. After preliminary feints the challenger is dealt a resounding blow on his chest, and this is repeated, with intervals to allow for recovery, three times. Each stroke leaves angry red weals, and may draw blood. It is the

aim of the youth to remain under the fixed gaze of the men and girls of his side without flinching, for if he winces he will bring down upon himself the contempt of the girls and shame on his kindred. If he successfully passes the ordeal he returns another day for his revenge, the position of challenger and tester being reversed on the next occasion.

The preparation of youths to undergo the *Shero* ordeal, I was informed, follows four main lines—namely, abstention from sexual intercourse, fasting, avoidance of sour milk, and the drinking of "medicine" credited with possessing magical protective qualities. A curious reason was given for the fasting. My informants held that lack of food causes lack of blood, and hence a greater difficulty of it being spilt when the body is subjected to thrashing.

Apart from the performance of *Shero* ceremonies on the occasion of them, the two principal seasonal festivals—the Gani and New Year celebrations—are characterised by a relaxation of much of the social restraint normally exercised in everyday life, especially as between the sexes.

The Gani festival lasts for a month. It is not recognised by the stricter Muslims among the Keffi Yegomawa on the ground that it is a pagan custom, but it is made much of by the Shuwalbe. During the Fulfulde month of Gani, dances are held, in which chiefly the young persons of the tribe of both sexes participate, and sexual licence is tolerated between age-mates still within the years of childhood or less than one year married, who have not become pregnant. Dancing, music and song go on far into the night, the singing

of lewd songs by both sexes at members of the opposite sex being features of the proceedings. On the cessation of the communal celebrations the youths retire to sleep with the maidens of their choice. Consummation on such occasions is said sometimes to be *coram populo*, but I have not seen it.

Out of the sexual promiscuity indulged in during this month, which practically amounts in individual cases to one or more trial marriages, many final choices of husbands and wives emerge, and unions are formed which, it is claimed, are more permanent for having been made after freedom of choice exercised by both parties.

The chance of a young man who has undergone the *Shero* ordeal during the Gani month being accepted by the maiden of his choice often, of course, bears a relationship to the degree of fortitude manifested by him. In consequence some young men will take part in a number of consecutive *Shero* contests in a single month, the scars of which they may bear throughout life, for the purpose of enhancing their prestige in the ranks of the marriageable maidens.

The other principal seasonal festival is held at the New Year by both the pagan and the Muslim Fulani. The Muslims provide a Koranic explanation for holding it, or at any rate for its fire-fighting ingredient. This they explain as being a mock representation of the battle of Zumzum, which is said to have been fought by the Prophet Muhammad in the twelfth month against pagans for the right of access to the Zumzum waters—the same which, according to Arab tradition, were miraculously revealed by the angel Gabriel to Hagar, the slave-woman of Abraham, and her son, Ishmael,

when they were dying of thirst in the wilderness. The Borroros, however, do not admit having borrowed the custom from the Muslims.

The festival lasts for two nights. In the late afternoon, before the ceremony starts, the participants go and bathe in the river. They are divided into two groups, usually consisting of the members of different *rugas* (cattle camps) or of different *ungwas* (wards) in a town. Each group collects long palm-poles (*gongololi*) or fire-hardened corn-stalks—whichever may be obtainable—and grass, and assembles in an open space. The grass is placed on the end of the poles and lit, and the rival sides proceed to fight each other with these flaming torches. The women do not take part, but watch the proceedings. Much damage was formerly done to participants, not to mention grass roofs, but the responsibility for harm done during the celebrations was not laid at the door of individuals.

In post-Administration days, of course, the character of this ceremony has been toned down, at any rate in the larger towns, where it has assumed the form of little more than torchlight processions with some horseplay.

After the conclusion of the torchlight processions on the night of New Year's eve a feast is held, and it is customary, at any rate among the Shuwalbe, to leave the remains of the supper outside on the ground, the reason assigned being that children playing late at night might like to eat up the remains before turning in to bed. Since the leaving out of the remains of a meal is confined to this one day of the year it seems possible that the custom may be analogous in origin to that of

the Bretons, who leave the remains of the All Souls' supper on the table for the ghosts of the dead kinsfolk to partake of.

On the night of New Year's eve there is much jollity, and it is the custom for those relatives who stand to each other in the relationship of comrades-in-sport to make fun of and play practical jokes on each other in much the same way as is done in Europe on April Fools' Day.

In accordance with the general charitable spirit prevailing, the actual passing of the old year and entry of the new is signalised by the giving of presents and alms to friends and relations, and to persons of lower social status to the givers, with the avowed object of propitiating everyone and securing their good will for the coming year.

There is one striking peculiarity of the Borroro festivals in comparison with those of other pagan tribes. They are not associated, so far as I could discover, with the public performance of any religious sacrifices.

Among the Shuwalbe two main occasions only for the public sacrifice of cattle present themselves during the year. The first is their annual leaving of their wet-season quarters to set off on their dry-season wanderings, and the second their settling down for the wet season in a new camp at the conclusion of the dry season. The former ceremony is usually carried out by the *ruga* head on a Friday, since Saturday is the day most favoured for setting off on a journey.

Black cattle are selected, if available, for sacrifice, because tradition has it that the first cattle miraculously given to their ancestors by their ancestor water-spirit

were black. It is believed that the blood of these first animals still flows in black cattle, the shedding of whose blood is consequently regarded as a more fitting sacrifice to the Supreme Power than that of any other kind. The animal to be sacrificed is slaughtered, just before dawn, close to the place where the fire is lit each evening to warm the cattle. The reason for this is that the remaining cattle of the herd, when they return to the spot in the evening, may lie down on the blood-stained ground and absorb the beneficial properties of the blood of the sacrifice by physical contact with it. The flesh of the sacrifice is divided up among, and eaten by, all the members of the *ruga*.

It is considered sacrilegious to dispose of black cattle in any other way than in the course of sacrificial rites.

NOTE

[1] Abridged edition, p. 330.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Social Ceremonies

LIKE the public festivals of the Shuwalbe, one finds that their private social ceremonies, associated with such occasions as initiations, betrothal, marriage, childbirth, child-naming and death, are also characterised by a relative simplicity and lack of complicated religious ceremonial, foreign to the celebrations of their neighbours.

With regard to initiation, the holding of communal boys' circumcision ceremonies, on the conclusion of which the youths were received back as members of an adult age-class, was formerly practised by both settled and nomad Fulani. It has, however, fallen into desuetude of recent years among the Yegomawa, who now treat initiation largely as a private matter to be arranged according to convenience by the parents of the youths concerned. The Shuwalbe, on the other hand, still circumcise boys in batches at the age of six or seven. Each batch of circumcised youths live together in shelters outside the *ruga* until their wounds are healed, their food being brought out to the camp by the womenfolk and left outside it for the youths to collect.

The moral instruction of the youths during the period of boyhood is in the hands of their father, and not, as among the Keffi Yegomawa (settled) Fulani, in the hands of their paternal uncle. Similarly the upbringing

of girls during the period of maidenhood is entrusted among the former to the mother and among the latter to the paternal aunt.

Neither group practises clitoridectomy, nor any other operation on females analogous to circumcision, contrary to the custom of the neighbouring Bassa, Gada, Mada and Yoruba.

In both groups the relative responsible for the moral instruction of the young people also arranges the formalities and provides the necessary presents on the occasion of their "betrothal" or "marriage." The former word is perhaps the better by which to translate the native concept, since there is no marriage ceremony in the ordinary sense of the term among the Shuwalbe, in contrast to the practice of the settled Fulani, who publicly celebrate their marriages with much music, dancing and feasting. What is called a marriage ceremony by the Shuwalbe is rather in the nature of a betrothal, as it usually takes place during the infancy of the parties. There is, however, no subsequent ceremony prior to the commencement of cohabitation.

The betrothal ceremony is not of a complicated character. The parties themselves play no part, nor is the actual father or mother of either party present. All the available other relatives of both parties, male and female, and their friends attend. The ceremony consists in the presentation by a brother of the bridegroom to the brother of the bride of what I propose to call an "espousal fee" (*kurdin aure*), consisting of two castrated bulls. The recipient kills them and divides the flesh among the guests, who consume it all at the

sitting, including the hide. I omitted to inquire into the precise manner of disposal of the hide, but the fact that it also had to be consumed on this occasion was stressed as important by my informants. The cattle sacrificed may be of any colour, but cattle of one of the colours of those first given to the Fulani ancestors by the water-spirit, Fu—namely, black or white ones without blemish—are preferred. The officiating relative of the bridegroom testifies to the covenant now established between the parties, to which testification the officiating relative of the bride bears confirmatory testimony.

It will be noticed that, in referring to the consideration (in the legal sense of that term) which passes from the representative of the prospective husband to the representative of the prospective bride on the occasion of the "betrothal" or "marriage" ceremony, I have used the term "espousal fee." This, I am aware, is not a generally recognised anthropological technical term, but I do not think any apology is necessary for its invention; for a reasonably appropriate term is urgently required to use in substitution for the old-fashioned expression "bride-price," which has hitherto been generally employed to translate the native terms for such payments occurring among most African tribes.

As Mr Torday has recently pointed out in *Man*, "it is of more than academic importance that a better word should be substituted for the traditional 'bride-price'; Pagett, M.P., has been lately vigorously on the war-path, and has acquainted us with the fantastic conclusions of slavery, and traffic in daughters, he has drawn, thanks to this unfortunate word, from his superficial

observations during his flying visits to Africa. After all, he is the man who will make the laws for the Colonies, and ought not to be misled."

The same authority mentions that modern writers on African sociology—of which he quotes a number—are practically agreed that marriage among the natives does not consist of the buying and selling of the bride; and that the Commission inquiring into South African laws and customs came to the conclusion that *lobolo* (a word which has in the past been translated "bride-price") is neither dower nor the price of a purchase; a basket of corn, a hoe or any trifle seals the contract as well as many heads of cattle.

In conclusion he says: "It is, of course, scarcely possible to find an English word which will convey the meaning of every native expression translated as 'bride-price'; but it would be difficult to find one which is more inadequate and mischievous. Tentatively, I should like to suggest the word 'earnest.' According to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 'it is almost similar to the arrha of the Roman law, which may be traced back in the history of legal institutions to a period when the validity of a contract depended not so much upon the real intention of the parties, as upon the due observance of a prescribed ceremony. . . . But *earnest* was never a part payment, which arrha might have been. . . . Any sum, however small, would be sufficient as *earnest*, being given as a token that the contract is binding and should be expressly stated so by the giver.'" [1]

Mr Torday's suggestion was discussed, in a subsequent number of *Man*, by Professor Radcliffe-Brown, who wrote: "The payment of the *lobola* is certainly

not by itself sufficient to 'seal the contract,' and I do not think it really fills that particular function at all. The payment of cattle for a wife is functionally parallel to the payment of cattle for a man who has been intentionally or accidentally killed. In both cases the payment is an 'indemnity' or payment of compensation to a group (family or clan) that loses a member." In conclusion he says: "Meanwhile, I believe that the *lobola* of the Zulu, or the *bohadi* of the Basuto, is much more accurately described as an 'indemnity' than as an 'earnest.'"[2]

As to the *kurdin aure* of the Shuwalbe, the evidence provided by the details of the "betrothal" ceremony would seem to show clearly enough that it is considered in one aspect as "earnest" and in another as "indemnity." The dividing of the two bullocks, handed over by the bridegroom's representative on the occasion of the arrangement of a "best marriage," among the relatives of both parties to the betrothal seems, for instance, to accord more with the idea of the provision of "earnest" "to seal the contract" than of "purchase money." On the other hand, the demanding of a greater number of cattle from a suitor who has not a conventional right—such as a party to a "best marriage" has—to ask a given girl to be his bride appears to bring out equally clearly the idea of "indemnity." The payment of the extra cattle constitutes a recognition that a case for compensation arises when the conventional right of a girl to marry her cousin is infringed. From the point of view of the girl's family the loss is a real one. It means that the girl's personal property as well as her descendants pass completely out

of the control of her kindred, which would not occur if she married her cousin.

But when it has been admitted that the Shuwalbe *kurdin aure* partakes of the nature of both "earnest" and "indemnity" one has not stated more than two-thirds of the facts. These two words "earnest" and "indemnity" seem to cover satisfactorily the economic and juridical implications of *kurdin aure*, but there is another very important aspect, a ritualistic or religious one, of which these words take no cognisance.

The religious character of the Shuwalbe "betrothal" ceremony seems, at any rate where a "best marriage" is being arranged, even more important than its economic and juridical aspects. For, like the Roman *confarreatio*, it consists simply of the sacrifice of an ox before witnesses and the sacramental eating of the flesh of the slain victim by the representatives of the espoused persons and their relatives. The choice of the most sacred kind of cattle—namely, black ones—for sacrifice, and the ritualistic regulation that the whole of the sacrificed animal, including the hide, must be consumed at the sitting, make it seem probable that the meal is regarded by the participants as a Communion Feast, at which the spirits associated with the sacrifice—probably in this instance the ancestral spirits of the contracting parties—are regarded as mystically present.

Viewed from a slightly different angle the transaction appears as an exchange of "sacred possessions" between the two parties. For the reverence and respect shown by the "Cow" Fulani to their cattle would appear to be hardly less than that shown to human beings—a conception which may have had its origin

in a totemistic belief in descent from cattle, to which reference has already been made.

The terminological problem has now been stated. What single English expression best translates the complex economic, juridical and religious conception implied by the native term *kurdin aure*? In adopting the expression "espousal fee" I have been guided by two considerations.

Firstly, the idea of "espousal" is wider than that of either "betrothal" or "marriage," since it includes both. Said of a father or sponsor, "to espouse" may imply "to betroth," plight or pledge in marriage (*i.e.* in itself it contains the idea of "earnest") or "to give in marriage, marry or wed." Said of a bridegroom, it implies "to marry or wed." It thus covers instances in which, as among the "Cow" Fulani, the "espousal fee" is given on betrothal in infancy and instances in which, as among the Kwottos, the "espousal fee" is finally handed over or completed on the wedding eve.

Secondly, the word "fee" in normal English usage may suggest a relation that is either primarily economic, primarily juridical or primarily religious, which cannot be said of Mr Torday's suggested "earnest" or Professor Radcliffe-Brown's suggested "indemnity." For one may pay a doctor a fee for ministering to the bodily wants. (A wife may also do this.) The transaction is here primarily economic. One may pay a Government Department a fee for a licence to hold or a right of user. (The sponsor of a bride may also give this.) Here the transaction may be mainly juridical.

Lastly, one reads in ecclesiastical history of "fees" being paid to priests for religious dispensations and the

saying of masses for the souls of the dead. In this connection the purpose of the payment is almost wholly unrelated to economics or jurisprudence and is preponderatingly religious. Among the Shuwalbe it has already been noted that marriage is governed by religious rules and that the dispensation of the spirits must be formally obtained through the *gumeji* (priest) of the group before unusual marriages may be contracted. It further seems that the *kurdin aure* supplied by the bridegroom is regarded in one aspect as made to obtain the good will (and consequently ensure the peaceful rest) of the souls of the guardian ancestors of the family of the bride, from whose immediate local charge, as it were, the husband removes her on marriage.

Among the Shuwalbe, about a year before the bride reaches marriageable age (*i.e.* puberty), a representative of the bridegroom presents his compliments to the guardian of the bride and formally requests her handing over. The formality is repeated about eleven months later and, on the second occasion, the day on which she will be prepared to leave the household is appointed. The younger sister of the bridegroom (or other younger female relative — *e.g.* father's brother's or father's sister's daughter) performs the duty of calling for the bride on the appointed day in the evening, escorts her by night to the dwelling of her husband, and places her in the shelter allotted for her dwelling. It would be considered extremely immodest for the bridegroom to be present at his camp on her arrival. So the night she is due to arrive he absents himself, passing about four days and nights in a neighbouring camp. The bride

during this period helps in the field and domestic work allotted to women among her new relatives. On the fifth day the bridegroom appears to greet his bride, but custom demands that he should continue to adopt a reserved attitude towards her for a period of about two months, until the end of which period he may not enter her hut or sleep with her.

Each wife has a separate hut, and remains normally resident in her husband's camp until she becomes enceinte.

Custom requires that she should return to her parents' home about the fourth month of her pregnancy, give birth there, and stay there throughout the period of weaning, which is reckoned at about three years. During the whole of this time she will not be visited by her husband. It will be apparent, however, in this connection, that under a system whereby patrilineal cross-cousins marry each other, the separated parties will often not be at a great distance from each other and will constantly be meeting each other's relatives.

The naming ceremony takes place at the house of the mother of the child to be named seven days after birth. Modesty forbids the presence of the mother's father at the ceremony if the child named is his first grandchild, but the taboo is usually relaxed in the case of subsequent grandchildren. For a similar reason the father himself does not attend. The mother's mother and all her relatives, all the relatives of the mother's father, as also those of the father, may be present, and their friends. Shuwalbe custom, however, forbids the presence of any of the age-mates of either the mother or the father of the child. This is in marked contrast to

the practice of the Keffi Yegomawa (settled) Fulani, among whom the age-mates of the child's parents are the principal guests at the naming ceremony.

There are no name-day anniversary ceremonies.

At the naming ceremony two castrated bulls, supplied by the father's relatives, are slaughtered for a first child or one for a second or later child. The assembled guests partake thereof and then disperse. Formerly no dancing or drumming took place on such an occasion, but the practice of turning a naming-day ceremony into a scene of revelry is gradually creeping in, due to the influence of the customs of the Shuwalbe's settled neighbours.

A child is very frequently called after its grandfather, for it is believed that old men are reincarnated in the form of their grandchildren.

After the period of matrilocal residence following birth is over, the wife and her child are escorted back to her husband's residence by her relatives—but not including either her mother or father—together with presents. The husband's relatives await her arrival at their camp.

Of *rites de passage* there remain death observances to be described.

The Shuwalbe custom is, if a male dies, to bury him in front of the cattle resting-place in the camp, facing the cattle he used to tend during life. The cattle resting-place is normally west of the dwelling-huts of the camp, any other direction being regarded as unlucky, so that the body will be buried in the extreme west of the camp, facing east. Women, conversely, are buried in the extreme east of the camp, near to the dwelling-huts, to

look after which was one of their chief preoccupations during life.

If a person, either male or female, dies on a Wednesday it is customary to bury either a live fowl or a new-grown and unopened calabash in the grave, to avert evil befalling the deceased.

After the occurrence of a death the corpse is buried as soon as possible. All available male and female relatives and neighbours of the deceased collect and wail around the corpse for an hour or so before consigning it to the grave. The attitude adopted by the mourners when wailing is a standing position, both hands placed either on the back or crown of the head. There are usually no sacrifices offered in connection with a burial ceremony, contrary to the custom of most Nigerian pagan tribes, who are found to possess an extremely elaborate funeral ceremonial designed to assist the ghost of the departed in its post-mortal wanderings.

The tendency of the nomads, on the other hand, especially in pre-Administration days, seems to have been to flee from death in terror. In former days, I was told, it was not unusual for a nomad camp to be struck if a death occurred in it, without stopping to bury the deceased. Further, owing to the exigencies of the nomadic life, old men or men afflicted with disease, who it was thought would not recover, were often deserted by their comrades or left to die or recover and rejoin them as Providence might direct. A case of the latter came to my notice in the Kurafi District. Fortunately the man left to die received succour from others, and thus was enabled eventually to rejoin his comrades.

In conclusion, it is interesting to observe that some of the most striking facts which emerge from a comparison of the pastoral Borroro with the settled Muslim customs are what one might perhaps almost have assumed a priori from the difference in their environment—namely, the relatively extraordinary degree of individual independence of both men and women, the familiarity of the terms of address, the carelessness of privacy in marital life, the promiscuity of the unmarried combined with the sentiment of group exclusiveness in sexual matters, and the simplicity of all the social ceremonies of the nomads when compared with the corresponding conditions and practices of their settled neighbours.

NOTES

[1] E. Torday, article, "Bride-price, Dower or Settlement," in *Man*, January 1929.

[2] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, article, "Bride-price, Earnest or Indemnity," in *Man*, July 1929.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Kwottos, Igaras & Jukuns

THE southern and western portions of the Nasawara Emirate are inhabited by a people known as the Kwottos, who are to-day, after the Fulani, the most important tribe, politically, in the Keffi Division.

Less than a hundred years ago the Kwottos were the paramount power in this area, and the greater part of what is now Keffi Division was included in the Kwotto kingdom of Panda, which comprised also portions of the territories to the west and east, now belonging to the Abuja and Lafia emirates. At this time the Fulani had not yet extended their conquests into the Benue Valley. The Fulani Emirate of Nasarawa, which now embraces Panda, had not been founded, while the power of the ancestors of the present Fulani emirs of Keffi hardly reached as yet beyond the immediate vicinity of their walled fortresses.

The two sister-kingdoms of Panda and Kotonkarife, on the Benue and Niger respectively, are referred to by the explorer Barth (1850-1855) as being in their zenith when he visited Hausaland; while Panda is mentioned by Lander (1826-1830) as second only to Timbuctoo and Kukawa in importance. Panda was, however, subject to raids from the Nupe on its west flank in the middle of the nineteenth century, and a few years later was finally conquered from the north

by Umaru, Makama Dogo, first Emir of Nasarawa, and its territory included in the Emirate of Nasarawa, where it is to-day.

Yet, in spite of its quondam importance, very little seems hitherto to have been known, or at least recorded, concerning either the origin or history of the kingdom of Panda itself, or the traditions, customs or affinities of its rulers.

With a view to placing on record as much information as might be obtainable in regard to these matters before the knowledge of them died with its possessors a *questionnaire* on the subject was submitted to the Resident of the Nasarawa Province. I had during my previous leave attended a course of instruction in "Social Anthropology" at London University, and on this account was fortunate enough to be selected to make the necessary tour of inquiry through the Kwotto districts.

I started by investigating the subjects specified in the *questionnaire*, but soon found it necessary, for purposes of explaining the material obtained under these heads, to enlarge the scope of my inquiries. During later Administrative tours, undertaken at intervals during the two subsequent years, I took the opportunity of pursuing further inquiries, both in regard to the subjects originally investigated and others, with a view to obtaining as complete an outline as possible of the traditions and practices of the Kwotto civilisation.

Some of the detailed results of my observations and inquiries in regard to this people are given in the remaining chapters of this book. Owing to the fact that intensive ethnological inquiry is not a normal part of

one's duties, and therefore has to be carried out in one's spare time, I did not find an opportunity before leaving Nigeria to piece together more than a small proportion of the notes I made from time to time. Those which I submitted to Government were approved by the authorities for publication in their original official-note form in the *Journal of the African Society*, through whose courtesy I am permitted to include their substance also in this narrative.

A note on the language medium used in the collection of this information may be of interest. Most of the Kwottos, like the local Keffi Fulani, are bilingual, speaking both their native tongue and Hausa. I was thus able to converse with all my informants directly in the latter language and so avoid errors due to mistranslation by an interpreter.

The use of the word "Kwotto" as a tribal name requires some preliminary explanation. This is the term by which the tribe is known to the Fulani Native Administration, through whom they are ruled at the present day. The Fulani Emir of Nasarawa, to whom they owe allegiance, is at the present day normally addressed as "Sarkin Kwotto" (Chief of the Kwottos), a title conferred on his ancestor by the Emir of Zaria to commemorate his victory over the Kwottos at Panda. The use of his alternative title, "Sarkin Nasarawa," is practically confined to formal documents. The word "Kwotto" is a shortened form of the compound term "Kwotto-Gara," which is a Hausa corruption of Okpoto-Igara. This term was applied by the Hausas to the tribe in question in recognition of the fact that their ancestors were persons of Igara origin who migrated

from the (originally) Okpoto town of Idah. Idah is on the east bank of the River Niger, about fifty miles south of its confluence with the Benue.

The Igara conquerors fused to some extent with their Okpoto subjects, although they did not use the Okpoto tongue (Idoma) as their Court language. The situation as regards terminology is therefore much the same as that which obtained in England shortly after the Norman Conquest. The Norman conquerors at that time had fused to some extent with their English subjects, although they did not use English as their Court language, and were no doubt referred to by their outside neighbours, such as the Welsh, more or less indiscriminately as Norman-English, Normans or English, according to the speaker's point of view.

As the local outside world (the Fulani and the Hausas) has happened to choose the word "Kwotto," rather than Igara or Igbira—which would theoretically have been equally appropriate — to describe the Igbira-speaking Okpoto-Igaras of the Nasarawa Emirate, I propose to use this term in my narrative in preference to the term "Igbira," by which they call themselves. The adoption of this terminology has the further advantage of distinguishing the tribe in question from the Idoma-speaking Okpotos and Yoruba-speaking Igaras on the one hand and other Igbira-speaking peoples on the other.

Mr Meek, in his ethnographical account of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria, published in 1925,[1] uses the term Igara to cover not only the Igaras and Okpotos of the Munshi Province but also the Kwotos (*sic*—an alternative but less common spelling of Kwottos)

of the Nasarawa Province. I do not follow him in this, however, for to my mind it is rather like lumping together the English, Welsh and Irish, with their distinctive languages and minor differences in custom, as "English"—a term which I think would be unsatisfactory as an ethnographical description of the three peoples in question.

The following is the traditional account of the origin and early history of the Kwottos as narrated to me by some of the elder members of the present royal house of Umaisha, who are the lineal descendants and the chief depositaries of the tradition of the Kwotto kings of Panda.

The location of the town of Umaisha is on the north bank of the River Benue, about forty miles east of its confluence with the Niger, and the capital of a district of that name. The ruins of the ancient city of Panda are situated about twenty miles north-east of Umaisha, close to the west bank of the River Nasarawa.

The Kwottos were, at the time of the migration from Idah, of the same stock as the Igara rulers of that capital, and themselves spoke the Igara language, which is a dialect of Yoruba. The ancestor, called Ohimi, who first crossed the Benue was a son of Hakwakumabi, the then reigning Attah (King) of Idah. Hakwakumabi was followed on the Idah throne by Attahs named Akuodiba and Amagau, and it was in the reign of the latter that Ohimi's descendants founded Panda. Ohimi and his fellow-Okpoto-Igaras learned the language of the people they settled amongst, and assumed sway over, and so came to speak Igbira.

On this account they came to call themselves Igbira,

in the same way as the Jukuns from Wukari who conquered Idah and adopted the language of the pre-existing ruling caste came to call themselves Igaras; or, to take a European parallel, as the Scandinavians who conquered Normandy adopted French and came to be called Normans; and later conquered the Anglo-Saxons, learned their language and came to call themselves English. The town of Wukari is situated near the Benue river, about two hundred miles east of its confluence with the Niger.

The Kwotto rulers still maintain contact with the Wukari Jukuns, and even at the present day will send to Wukari when they require certain cloths, barks, etc., for replacements in connection with magico-religious objects employed in royal ritual. The sacred royal spear called Hukuti, still in the possession of the District Head of Umaisha, is said to have been obtained direct from the Jukun king of Wukari by one of the kings of Panda.

Until the conquest of Panda by the Fulani, the latter also kept up the connection with the rulers of Idah, every Kwotto king of Panda sending presents to the Attah of Idah on the occasion of his appointment. The sacred royal staff of office of the kings of Panda, now in the possession of the present District Head of Umaisha, was given to the first king of Panda, named Ohimnagedu, by the then reigning Attah of Idah.

Ohimi, the first Igara to cross the Benue, first established himself and the headquarters of his Kwotto kingdom at a place called Akwanga, about twenty miles north-west of the later town of Kpoto or Umaisha.

A few years later an Attah of Idah named Amagau declared war against Ohimi, because the latter had dared to assume an imperial title on his own account instead of claiming the new territory north of the Benue in the name of the Attah of Idah. Amagau routed the Kwotto forces, and slew Ohimi near Akwanga, and then retired south of the Benue.

After the death of Ohimi his kingdom split in two. One of his sons, Hajegwa, moved with his following to Kongo, about five miles north-east of Akwanga, whence his successor, Ohimnagedu, moved to Panda, about twenty miles north-east of the later town of Umaisha, becoming the first Kwotto king of Panda. Another son of Ohimi, named Ohetenyi, moved westwards to Girni, whence his successor, Onyako, moved to the site on the Niger later known as Kotonkarife, and became the first Kwotto king of the kingdom afterwards called by that name.

The District Head (or, as he is termed by his subjects, the *Ohimegwe*) of Umaisha was able to furnish me with what purported to be a list of the kings of Panda and their successors, the district heads of Umaisha, from the foundation of Panda to the present day, together with some notes concerning them. These I have recorded elsewhere.[2] The general conclusion to be drawn from this data would appear to be that Panda was founded probably some time between A.D. 1750-1800, that it flourished for somewhat less than a century, until *circa* 1850, when the last Kwotto paramount chief, Aigu, was slain, at the capture of Panda by Umaru, Makama Dogo, first Emir of Nasarawa. The refugees then fled to the neighbouring Toto and Umaisha

districts, where they eventually surrendered to the Fulani.

It has been seen that the kingdoms of Panda and Kotonkarife were both, in a historical sense, offshoots of the kingdom of Idah, having been founded by adventurous scions of the Igara royal house. The last-mentioned kingdom appears to have come into being in somewhat similar fashion *circa* A.D. 1700-1750 — that is to say, about fifty years prior to the founding of Panda—as a result of the warlike excursions of certain members of the ruling family of the Jukun Empire of Kworarafa or Apa. The Jukun dynasty of Idah superseded a line of rulers of Yoruba-speaking affinity, who had first established their ascendancy over the indigenous Idoma-speaking peoples about a hundred years previously.

Concerning the present rulers of Idah, Mr Palmer writes: "The ruling caste which resulted from the fusion of Jukuns into the pre-existing ruling class adopted as their Court language the Yoruba dialect, which was presumably the language of the latter. This language is now known as Igara or Igala — a term which is also applied to the people who speak it, in contradistinction to the peoples subject to them, who in general speak dialects called Idoma.

"By blood, therefore, and to a large extent by culture also, the Attahs of Idah belong to the Kworarafa ruling castes, who in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries dominated the eastern portion of the present Nigeria, and were themselves of cognate origin with the early rulers of Kanem, or were originally Hamites or Tuwareg of the Eastern Sudan and Sahara." [3]

We have now traced the general outline of the history of the Kwottos and their ancestors back through Panda and Idah to the Jukun Empire of Kwororafa.

It is not possible to suggest with confidence even an approximate date as to when the Jukuns may have migrated to the neighbourhood of the later town of Wukari, in the vicinity of which they established their capital city of Apa or Afa, whence they derived from the Hausas the nickname of K(w)ororafa (plural, K(w)ororafawa)—*i.e.* the "K(w)oros," or "white men," of Apa. But if their claim to have been the earliest inhabitants of Bornu is true, it would seem probable that they arrived in that country not later than the middle of the first millennium B.C.

The earliest-known historical mention of the Jukuns refers to the eleventh century A.D. At the end of that century, Dr Barth mentions (quoting various early authorities), the Jukuns laid siege to the capital of Bornu. In the fourteenth century, the Habe (Hausa) records tell us, the Kwororafawa invaded Bauchi and Zaria. They seem to have reached the zenith of their power at the end of the sixteenth century, when they advanced on Kano and laid waste the surrounding country. Bello, Sarkin Musulmi, writing in the first half of the nineteenth century, refers to the Jukun Empire of Kwororafa as one of the seven greatest kingdoms of the Sudan, the territory of which included all the lower and part of the middle portion of Hausaland. To the south, it has been said elsewhere, their sovereignty extended beyond the Cross river as far as the Atlantic. Their power began to decline in the eighteenth century, and when the Fulani advanced

against them from the north in 1815 the Jukuns collapsed, and were driven back to their present position astride the Benue. They left behind them, however, important traces of their predominance in the spiritual and material culture of the tribes who were formerly subject to their political as well as their religious authority.

NOTES

[1] C. K. Meek, *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, vol. ii., pp. 175, 188.

[2] J. R. Wilson-Haffenden, "Notes on the Kwottos of Toto," in the *Journal of the African Society*, vol. xxvi., No. CIV., July 1927.

[3] Introductory article by H. R. Palmer, C.M.G., in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. lviii., January-June 1928.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Totems & Wer-Wolves

THE Kwotto tribe is divided into a number of totem clans, all the members of each of which regard themselves as descended from a common ancestor. This sentiment of common relationship is so strong that marriage within the clan—*i.e.* of any clansman with any of his fellow-clanswomen—is forbidden as incestuous.

Totem descent is reckoned through males: therefore children belong to the clan of their father, and a person's mother always belongs to a different clan than himself or herself.

But each individual, by virtue of the nature of his birth, is regarded as possessing not only what I propose to call a "pattern" or "paternal" soul (*ekiti*), but also a "matter" or "maternal" soul (*kofi*). The former is derived from the father (or, more strictly, from one of the father's paternal ancestors). It is associated with the totem, and regarded as normally resident in the head. The latter is derived from the mother, and is associated with the "matter" of the body in general, and the blood in particular.

I am aware, or at any rate imagine, that the terms "pattern-soul" and "matter-soul" are novel expressions, but make no apology for their invention. For by reason of their double association—*i.e.* of the ordinary meaning of the words, on the one hand, and that of their

similarity, in sound and presumably also in etymology, to the words "paternal" and "maternal," on the other—they seem convenient English terms by which to express certain non-English concepts. The former phrase is required to convey the idea of a "soul" on to the "pattern" or, to use Biblical phraseology, "in the image" of which the child is shaped or moulded in the womb, and which is itself conceived as having an ethereal shape on the analogy of that of the body: while the latter has reference to a "soul" which is responsible for the production of the "matter" or substance, as distinct from the shape and other attributes, of the body, and which is conceived as a sort of amorphous spiritual force or influence. From these ideas the interesting social dogma naturally follows whereby a man or woman is regarded, on the one hand, as of one substance with the mother, but, on the other hand, as resembling in appearance not her, but one of the father's male or female ancestors.

From the foregoing it will be seen that the above reference to totem-clan descent being reckoned through males does not imply that that is the only form of reckoning descent recognised in the community. Blood descent (*i.e.* descent as reckoned through females only) is also of importance in determining the incest laws of the tribe. For not only is a man prohibited from marrying a fellow totem-clanswoman, but also a fellow blood-clanswoman—*i.e.* anyone known to be related to him through his mother. For the sake of convenience the word "clan" in the following pages will be used exclusively as an abbreviation of "totem clan."

The totems of the Kwotto clans are all named after

different animals, mostly wild ones. For example, there are lion, leopard, crocodile, python and monitor clans. One clan only, that of the goat, is named after a domestic animal.

Each individual animal belonging to each totem species is regarded as connected with each member of the clan named after it by a mystic relationship, and the souls of prominent members of each clan are believed after death to be born again in the shape of the clan totem. Any sudden appearance of a totem animal at night, during either a man's waking or dreaming hours, is often interpreted as a warning of the imminent death of a fellow-clansman.

Members of a clan are addressed by their fellow-members, and by members of other clans, by the name of their totem animal. No totem ornaments are worn by members to indicate their clan, nor could I find that any mutilations are practised with the object of causing clansmen to resemble their totem animals, as in other parts of the world. On the contrary, in former days it is said the Kwottos used to break their two front upper teeth from the outside edge of each tooth inwards and upwards towards the centre of the mouth, thus forming an inverted V gap (*sic* Λ) in the middle of the upper row of teeth. The traditional reason was to render their teeth in appearance unlike those of a goat. The practice is said formerly to have been observed even by members of the goat totem. Nowadays, however, teeth mutilation is almost unknown among Kwottos of the Keffi Division.

No member of a totem clan may kill his totem animal, but a member of one clan may kill the totem of another, even if it be the clan of his wife or mother. This

is subject to the proviso that, after killing any of the more powerful totem animals, the slayer would have to propitiate the chief of the clan to which the totem belonged, in order to escape the spiritual danger to which he would otherwise become liable.

It is said to have been not an uncommon thing in pre-Administration days, if an unauthorised person killed a totem animal, for the clan chief to arrest him on a charge of murder. This was on much the same principle as that on which, in former times, a man who cut down a tree believed to be tenanted by an ancestor ghost would render himself liable to the death penalty.

If the members of a clan desire the death of one of their totem animals for any reason—*e.g.* of a leopard causing havoc in a town or of a goat required to be killed for sacrifice—they request the members of another clan to kill it for them. At the same time they offer propitiatory sacrifices to the spirit of the totem, pointing out that they are not killing it of malice, but only from necessity, and, further, that they are not killing it with their own hands. But clansmen will not readily be persuaded of the necessity of killing their totem. For example, if a leopard causes harm to the members of the leopard clan, many propitiatory sacrifices would first be offered to the totem ancestor thought to reside in the animal before they would become convinced of the necessity for killing it. Their first impulse would be to regard the trouble as due to their lack of attention to their ancestor, who, in consequence, had adopted an aggressive attitude towards them.

All clans prohibit the eating of their totem, but a man may eat the totem of another clan, even that of his

wife or mother. He would not offend the feelings of the clanspeople in question, however, by eating their totems in their presence.

A number of legends explaining the origin of these totemic beliefs are current among the Kwottos. They are varied, and it is doubtful whether one can look with assurance to any one of them for an authoritative solution of the problem which they purport to solve. But their general drift would certainly seem to throw some light on the possible ultimate cause to which the beliefs may be referred.

A legend explaining the origin of the lion totem is to the effect that, seven days after the death of the first chief of the lion clan, persons visiting his grave saw a lion standing on the top of it. This unusual and unexpected sight was taken by the witnesses as proving that the chief had actually turned into a lion on death. This provides a good example of the *post hoc, propter hoc* type of argument, which doubtless accounts for many irrational beliefs. It is also instructive as showing on what slender direct evidence beliefs in resurrection may be based in a society which regards human beings and animals as interchangeable.

A parallel story is told to explain the origin of the leopard as a totem and the belief that chiefs and important persons change into leopards when they die.

A crocodile myth runs as follows. Many years ago, when the Kwottos were at war with neighbouring tribes, the inhabitants of a certain village were in danger of being attacked and overwhelmed by superior forces of the enemy. The latter were advancing along the path leading to the forest, in the heart of which the village

was situated. The invaders, when they had nearly reached the village, found the only available path blocked by a crocodile lying across it. This cast such fear into them that they retired. Villagers who had observed their miraculous deliverance through the agency of the crocodile reported it to the village chief. He then decreed that henceforward the crocodile species were to be regarded as their friends, and were not to be killed. Eventually, through the friendship thus established between the crocodiles and villagers, a mystical relationship grew up between them. In time, they became so closely associated with each other that the human chiefs and elders acquired the power of changing at death into these saurians.

An alternative version has it that the crocodile clan originated as follows. At Toto, which is the headquarters of the clan, there is a river, named Kunama, which contains many crocodiles. The founder of the clan, one Ohitoto, the first Village Head of Toto, was definitely seen by witnesses regarded as reliable to change from human form into that of a crocodile on the banks of this river seven days after death. It is noteworthy how the mystical number "seven" recurs in these legends.

An etiological myth, parallel in its essentials to the first-mentioned story of the crocodile, is told to account for the ability of members of the python clan to change into pythons and for the various taboos in connection with this totem animal—that is to say, the acceptance of the belief in the kinship tie between the clansmen and the python is explained as based on the circumstance that the ancestors of the human group were saved

from a perilous situation by the ancestors of the animal group. The latter were then in gratitude consecrated, as it were, as blood-brothers by the humans. Later, the mystical relationship subsisting between them gave each the power of changing into the other.

The legend narrated to account for the adoption of the goat as a totem is as follows. One day a slave felt hungry, and ate a portion of his master's yams. On the return of the owner he endeavoured to avoid the punishment which his irate master was about to inflict on him by making out that a goat close by, and not he himself, had eaten them. At this juncture the goat obligingly came up and ate the remains of the yams which the slave had left, thus proving to the satisfaction of the master that the slave was innocent. This kindness on the part of the goat caused the slave to set up the goat as his totem in gratitude for services rendered. Although this totem, which is the only one consisting of a domestic animal, was thus originally adopted by a slave—presumably a member of another tribe captured in war—the majority of the goat clan at the present day, it is pointed out, are regarded as being as pure Kwottos as the members of other clans.

Finally, existing side by side with the above etiological myths is a belief held by some Kwottos that the totem-clan organisation had its origin in forms of salutation adopted out of personal pride by the founders of the clans, and was not directly due to any historical incidents connected with totem animals. Thus, when the family of the founder of the tribe scattered and formed the different clans, according to this belief, the senior insisted on being addressed by his juniors by

the, to him, high-sounding title of lion. The next in age chose the name of a less imposing but nevertheless an impressive-looking animal, such as a leopard—and so on. This explanation, it will be observed, resembles to some extent that put forward by Andrew Lang to account for the origin of totemistic clan names—namely, that they originated as sobriquets.

Before leaving the subject of the origin of totemistic beliefs it may be of interest to refer to an explanation which appears to have commended itself to some European writers on West Africa, but which, as might be expected, I have never heard advanced by the natives themselves. According to this, it is said that natives, when they came to live on the banks of rivers infested with, say, crocodiles, would naturally come to respect creatures potentially so dangerous. They would refrain from molesting them from fear, and seek to ingratiate themselves with the brutes by petting them. The crocodiles, in exchange, would leave their human neighbours alone. Later a religious explanation might easily grow up to account for this state of affairs.

This theory seems plausible enough as an explanation of the case of sacred crocodiles, but it hardly seems applicable to that of lions and leopards, whom human kindness has not as yet succeeded in taming in the Kwotto districts.

Yet the untamable and savage character of these animals, as has been seen, has not in practice prevented them from being regarded by clansmen as mystically related to, and normally well disposed towards, the living. Such a seemingly paradoxical faith is on a par with the Kwotto—and indeed our own—belief in the

essentially benevolent character of the Supreme Being, which is held in spite of the obvious fact that there is much apparent injustice in the world. Among the Kwottos the Supreme Being is regarded as just and benevolent, malevolence and injustice being explained by reference to the existence of powers of evil. The belief in harmful wild totem animals as harmless is susceptible of a somewhat similar explanation.

In effect, clansmen are content to regard individuals of a totem species—so long as they maintain a more or less harmless attitude in relation to human beings—as animated by the just and benevolent spirits of their ancestors. But when they become habitually malevolent the phenomena can be explained as due to the action of a human wizard or witch, or other person possessed of an evil spirit, who has changed himself temporarily into an animal shape. Such human beasts correspond to the "wer-animals"—or "wer-wolves," as they are usually called—of European folk-lore. The difference in conception between totem animals embodying the spirits of ancestors and wer-wolves animated by evil spirits, it will thus be seen, is chiefly a moral one. Both conceptions depend on a belief in the essential similarity in kind between animal and human souls, from which is derived the notion of the possibility of their interchange. The two beliefs tend at times to merge into each other. The distinction, for example, would appear to be extremely fine between the conception which regards a marauding lion or leopard as a totem animal inhabited by an irate kinsman, who is justly chastising the living for their neglect of him, and that which regards the same lion or leopard as a wer-animal causing

unjust havoc among mankind out of pure wizardly malice. The supernatural fear engendered by one kind of animal in such circumstances is much on a par with that caused by the other.

It is, therefore, difficult to say with which of these attitudes of mind (*i.e.* of fear based on respect or of respect based on fear) various observances—such as the magico-religious rites practised by hunters with the object of propitiating the larger wild animals — are more closely correlated. These rites will be described in a subsequent chapter.

The belief in wer-wolves is by no means confined to the Kwottos. It exists among all the neighbouring tribes, including the Mohammedan Hausa and Fulani. The animals into which witches are believed to turn are usually destructive ones. This is not surprising considering the destructive propensities attributed to witches. The principal alleged wer-animals which I have come across have been lions, leopards, cheetahs and hyenas. The three first-named were man-eaters.

I have already mentioned that a succession of deaths was caused in 1923 on the line of railway in construction near the Mada river by the visits of a lion or leopard man-killer to the various camps, and that after the slaying of a leopard and a lion in the vicinity no further casualties occurred. These man-eaters were believed by the natives to be not ordinary animals but witches in animal guise.

Similarly in 1926 a number of casualties were inflicted by a man-eating cheetah on a village in the Afu District close to Nasarawa. Hunters lay in wait for the brute and followed its tracks to no purpose. At length,

after one of its nocturnal visits, a hunting-party followed the trail of the man-eater some distance into the forest. There they were astonished to find that the animal spoor suddenly came to an end, giving place to that of a human being, and in front of them stood a man, lean, haggard and wild-looking. Here, at last, they thought, was the wer-cheetah they had been seeking. So they apprehended the supposed wizard, and took him to their District Head, before whom they accused him of murder. The District Head, not having judicial powers, referred the complainants and the accused to the court of the Emir of Nasarawa. He, having no power to deal with cases of murder, passed the complaint on to me.

It should be explained that, by a coincidence, on the same day that the accused was apprehended, another hunter succeeded in killing a cheetah. The cheetah, being considered a royal animal, was handed over to the Emir of Nasarawa, who had it skinned, and in his turn forwarded the skin on to me at Keffi.

The alleged wer-cheetah was brought before me with his accusers, and I asked for his version of the story. He informed me that he pleaded guilty to the charge of murder brought against him by his accusers. At night, he said, he was in the habit of changing into a cheetah and in that guise preying—spiritually, it must be understood—on human flesh. It was a fact, he said, that he and his brothers were the man-eaters who had been terrorising the Afu villages and that they had between them devoured a number of people. By way of proving that his statement was true he identified the skin of the slain cheetah as being the skin of his brother.

KWOTTO COURIER AND BEGGAR

THE COURIER WEARS THE BADGE OF THE INTERPRETER GRADE OF THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION NON-CLERICAL STAFF. THE BEGGAR IS A HALF LUNATIC ITINERANT MENDICANT.

There could be no doubt about its identity with his relative, he said. He fervently protested when I suggested that he might be mistaken.

His accusers were as convinced as the accused that he was really a wizard guilty of the deaths of their fellow-villagers. The cheetah's spoor had changed into a man's tracks at the identical spot where the accused was found. This, taken in conjunction with his confession, was considered to prove the matter.

It seemed clear from the inability of the unfortunate man to explain his movements or to give any coherent account of himself that he was suffering from some form of insanity. His uncanny, wild-looking appearance, extreme state of emaciation, and evident inability to look after himself, showed that one was dealing with a person requiring some form of supervision. I accordingly remanded him for medical observation. He was eventually certified as insane by the Medical Officer, but I regret to say did not long survive his incarceration in the Keffi Native Administration lunatic asylum.

This incident of the wer-cheetah seems to throw some light on the possible origin of some wer-animal beliefs. The primary factor which disposed the villagers to believe the accused to be a wer-animal, according to their account of the matter, was the observation that the spoor of the human-animal changed into that of the animal-human at the spot where the latter was found. A European on the evidence submitted would doubtless have concluded that the conjunction of the two sorts of tracks was due to the man having unwittingly wandered across the animal's spoor, which had somehow at that point become obliterated or indistinct. But not so the

native, because the fundamental beliefs on which he bases his conclusions—usually logical enough in relation to their premises—are so widely divergent from ours. As among us, preconceived theories often exercise a pernicious effect on scientific investigation, and the scientific iconoclast has a hard row to hoe. In this instance the profound conviction of the natives that the origin of the man-eating deaths was to be sought in the activities of a wer-animal would almost hopelessly weight the scales against any contrary interpretation of facts which could by any stretch of the imagination be made to fit in with the theory.

As to the reason for the existence of wer-animal beliefs, a plausible hypothesis seems to be that they may be partly attributable to the difficulty experienced by primitive man (as also sometimes by ourselves) in distinguishing between ocular illusions and actuality. Everyone who has followed big game knows how easy it is when one is looking for an animal to imagine that one has seen it, when actually all one has observed is some actual object, such as a tree or a rock curiously placed, which imagination has converted into what is uppermost in one's mind. It is also a commonplace that a sentry straining his eyes to detect the possible presence of the enemy is in similar manner most frequently misled into mistaking inanimate objects or animals for men. Further, it is well known that the effect of an excess of liquor is to distort the vision and cause the individual to see what in fact is not there. Faulty observation, aided by such circumstances as these and by a recurring series of coincidences, it would appear may partly account, as in the above instance,

for the continuance, if not for the origin, of these wer-animal beliefs.

The particular belief of the accused that at night he changed into a cheetah and preyed on humans would seem to be based on a confusion of subjective and objective impressions, natural to unsophisticated people, who cannot doubt the evidence of their own senses, whether waking, dreaming or in trance, and to whom the dream-wanderings and dream-visitations of the soul, while the body lies unconscious in sleep, are as real a part of experience as any other.

But apart from man-eaters, which invariably seem to be regarded as more witch than animal, by far the commonest wer-animal is the hyena. In Keffi Emirate, for example, the later arrived Mohammedan neighbours (the Fulani and the Hausa) of the earlier inhabitants (the pagan Gwandara) are convinced that the latter collectively possess the wizardly power of changing into hyenas. Consequently, when going among them, the former, in spite of their profession of Islam, often fortify themselves with charms to counteract the dangerous magical forces believed to saturate the environment. This provides an interesting illustration of the principle seen to apply in other parts of the world, that the more savage and remote the tribe the greater the powers of magic and witchcraft commonly attributed to them.

As to the reason for the selection of hyenas in preference to other animals as wer-beasts, there seem to be several predisposing circumstances which might account for it. Thus Keffi Emirate is peculiar from a geographical point of view in possessing a number of large isolated rocky hills scattered north, south, east

and west over the plain-lands which form the greater part of the emirate. When the Fulani slave-raiders invaded the country the Gwandaras took refuge in the vicinity of these hills, which provided useful look-out stations in addition to strategical retreats from their enemies. Since the establishment of the Pax Britannica the Gwandara have for the most part come down off their hill-tops and built their villages on the plain below. The Gwandara villages of Kokwana, Ungwan Gwandara, Ninkworo, Gitata, Koso, Ankoma and Maampa — to mention some of the principal ones—are so situated at the present day. The point is that the neighbourhood of these rocky formations is in fact infested with hyenas. It is, therefore, easy to see how faulty observation—more especially by strangers passing through—and a recurring series of coincidences could easily strengthen and maintain the belief in question.

A further significant fact is that wer-hyenas are practically the only beasts of prey which regularly frequent the dwelling-places of men. Often on their nocturnal marauding expeditions in search of goats, sheep, dogs, etc., they are seen and heard howling and laughing in the very streets of the village. Small wonder then that they are sometimes mistaken for human beings and, conversely, human beings are sometimes mistaken for them and shot.

In the case of a mistake of the latter kind, resulting in a man or woman being wounded or killed instead of an animal, the fact that the hunter's arrow was found in a human being would by no means necessarily, of course, be taken by a native as evidence of a mistake. On the other hand, it might equally well be taken as conclusive

proof that the wounded person was a wer-hyena turned back into human shape. For had not the arrow been definitely discharged at a human-animal—the sense impressions admitting of no disbelief—and the same arrow been found in an animal-human?

Conversely, if a villager suspected of being, say, a wizard and wer-lion were to die at the same time that a lion was killed in or near his village, the fact would be taken as strong presumptive evidence that he was a wer-animal, and that death had been caused by the destruction of his soul when temporarily in the body of the animal. This method, however, of slaying a human witch, by the vicarious destruction of an animal mystically identified with it, is not infallible. For a witch, like a human ghost, it is believed may be present in several places of several forms at the same time (which conception is of course familiar to us, since we ourselves attribute this property to the Holy Ghost). It is, therefore, by no means certain that the destruction of one manifestation will necessarily result in the destruction of all.

Somewhat similar psychological ideas are involved in some of the reincarnation beliefs of the Kwottos, according to which the soul of the dead may be born again as the son of a descendant with the mark of the wounds or other physical peculiarities possessed by the deceased appearing on the body of the child. These latter beliefs provide a further interesting example of the "spiritistic" as opposed to the "materialistic" explanations which are naturally given to well-known physiological facts in an animistic society. They also serve to illustrate the contention that "primitive logic"

does not differ in essentials from that of civilised man. Where the thought of the savage is at variance with our own is in the unspoken postulates which form his premises. Ghosts or bacteria, wer-wolves or soulless animals, these are but the symbols of predominantly romantic or rationalistic imaginations. They indicate the mystical or materialistic nature, respectively, of the a priori assumptions on which the philosophy of the culture in which they are found is built.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Animal Propitiation Rites

LIONS, leopards and all the larger wild animals are universally feared by members of both their own and other clans on account of the supposed powerful spiritual influence which, in the same manner as powerful men, they are held to possess.

This fear is in fact at the basis of all hunting and fishing magic, whereby it is sought to propitiate the souls of animals slain, whether members of a totem species or not.

The practice of such propitiatory or expiatory rites is as a rule confined to the larger or more important animals, such as, among non-totem animals, hyenas, buffaloes, the larger antelopes and ant-eaters. The object is both to protect the individual from future pursuit by the vengeful "pattern" soul (*ekiti*) of the slain and to purge him from his existing state of "saturation" with the spiritual influence or "matter soul" (*kofi*) of his victim.

I was given the following account by a hunter of the procedure stated to be adopted at the present day where a Kwotto hunter kills a lion at a place within the political jurisdiction of the chief of the lion clan.

After slaying the lion, the hunter, before taking any steps to remove it, reports the matter to the chief. At the same time he seeks to obtain the forgiveness of the latter, for having slain his kinsman, by the offer of presents, including a white cock and beer.

The chief, on his part, rewards the successful hunter for his valour by gifts, usually including a gown and turban. These, incidentally, are among the traditional items of apparel with which a senior chief invests a junior on appointment, so that the gift may conceivably in origin be connected with the idea of hailing the hunter as "chiefly," owing to his having become impregnated with the royal spiritual influence of the lion. The chief then arranges for a bearer-party to go and fetch the lion in order that it may be given ceremonial burial.

The lion is wrapped round with a red winding-cloth and carried on a bier in procession through the town into the presence of the chief, to the accompaniment of the beating of drums and the joyful shrill cry ("*Kururua*") of women. The people salute the corpse gravely as it passes, addressing it as "lion" and "grandfather."

Later the animal is flayed, only certain privileged members of the royal household, such as the Edibo, Shifornu and Audigwa, being allowed to touch the corpse; and the skin is presented to the chief to adorn his couch.

It is in fact a general rule among the Kwottos—not confined to the members of particular clans—that no one but a chief or his relatives may possess, much less wear or sit on, the skins of any of the larger wild beasts, especially those of the lion or leopard. Similar regulations apply also among all the surrounding tribes with which I am acquainted.

The skull of the dead lion is given to the hunter who killed it, to deposit on the lion-clan chief's grave, where he offers up sacrifice and prays before it. He beseeches

HYENA-CHARMING DISPLAY

THE HYENA CHARMER SMEARS HIS THROAT WITH BUTTER. HE THEN LIES DOWN AND THE HYENA LICKS IT OFF. THE HYENA IS USUALLY STONE BLIND.

the ghost (*ekiti*) of the lion not to harm him for his presumption in killing it, saying: "O Lion, I give you refreshment to-day, lest your spiritual power (*kofi*) cause me to die."

After burying the lion and before returning to live in his village the hunter retires to the bush for two days, where he performs certain further propitiatory and purificatory rites. These include the eating of a mixture containing atcha-millet, white beans, rice, seven ears of corn and seven ears of maize. To this is added palm-oil, and the whole boiled. Were the hunter to neglect to perform these rites it is believed he would go mad. His fellow-villagers will at any rate refuse to receive him into the village until he has purified himself from the *kofi* of the slain animal, conceived as still attaching to him. They fear that if they do so their houses, food and all their belongings will become contaminated, and the remaining lions come and avenge their comrades by "eating up" the village.

The purificatory hunting magic employed by the slayers of other large animals is similar in principle to that described above in the case of the King of Beasts. The nature and extent of the sacrifice deemed necessary to propitiate the different sorts of animals vary in accordance with the extent of their supposed spiritual power, the animals reckoned to be the strongest requiring the largest sacrifice.

An example is provided in the following account, given to me by a hunter, of the rites he performed to rid himself of the evil effects of killing a roan antelope.

The same day that he killed the roan he took certain leaves and crushed them into a powder. He rubbed

some of this powder on the head of the roan and put the remainder into a small pot. He then lit a fire, placed the pot upon it, and proceeded to inhale the fumes given off, at the same time praying for absolution in the following words: "O God (*Hinegba*) and Ye Spirits (*Ekiti*) of my Ancestors, and Thou Spirit (*Ekiti*) of the Roan, hear my prayer. Because I seek forgiveness for having slain thee, O Roan, I am acting thus. I did not kill thee of malice, but only of necessity to obtain food. Forgive me, I beseech thee, accept the sacrifice I have offered thee. Pardon me and cause me not to die." In addition to undergoing this process of fumigation he obtained from a shaman a certain magical medicine, which he ate to protect himself from being pursued by the soul of the roan. He consumed also a portion of flesh from the skull of the slain animal.

The general similarity between these purificatory rites and those—which will be described later—performed by headhunters to ward off danger from the angry soul of the slain man is noteworthy. It would seem to show clearly what would indeed appear sufficiently obvious from their totemic and wer-wolf beliefs and practices —namely, that the Kwottos do not regard the souls of animals as differing in their essential characteristics, such as their power of interference in human affairs or of survival after death, from those of mankind.

Thus the souls of both men and animals appear to be regarded as imperishable. This notion is suggested especially by the custom of invoking and propitiating the souls of deceased royal ancestors and the founders of totem clans for many generations after their death. Side by side with it there seems to exist the idea that

vengeful souls (or at any rate the vengeful elements in such souls) may be deprived of power, even possibly of existence, by various means. One of these means is by eating a portion of the body of the slain man or animal, in the manner just described, by warriors and hunters; while another method is by the complete destruction of the body—as employed, for example, in dealing with witches.

The custom of eating a portion of the body of the slain creature, in addition to imparting spiritual strength to the eater, appears to be regarded from another angle as a homeopathic means of curing him of the dangerous effects of impregnation by the vengeful "matter-soul" (*kofi*) of his victim, conceived of as acquired by contact with its body and blood. By thus ridding himself of his victim's *kofi* the hunter is believed at the same time to rid himself of the attentions of his victim's equally vengeful "pattern-soul" or ghost (*ekiti*), which up till then would naturally tend to hover near, and remain in association with, its *kofi* counterpart. Thus released from its slayer, the ghost of the slain, purged of its vengeful character, is believed to return to an association with the skull it inhabited during life, and in its new character and residence to constitute a potential spiritual aid to such as may invoke its assistance, as by prayer and sacrifice. Identical beliefs, it will be seen, exist also in relation to the skulls of men slain in battle.

The performance of elaborate propitiatory gestures and prayers by a headhunter or animal hunter over the corpse of his victim, as described above, tends perhaps at first to strike a European as not only indicative of a

childish and unintelligent mentality, but even as showing a depraved and blasphemous religious viewpoint.

On closer examination, however, I suggest that the above practices merely go to show how essentially similar to our own the native mind is. For it is in fact an easy matter to demonstrate that, given the reproduction of primitive conditions, many of us would, and indeed did but recently, react in response to analogous stimuli in a very similar manner to the native at the present day.

Consider, for example, the following extract from one of the diaries of a soldier of the Great War (*All Quiet on the Western Front*, by Erich Maria Remarque), in which he reveals how he was forced by an irresistible emotional urge to the performance of elaborate propitiatory gestures and prayers over the body of the slain. The physical horror of watching the dying agonies of the victim, the remorse caused by the religious sentiment of responsibility for having sent an innocent soul to eternity and the superstitious fear of the just resentment of the innocent victim, the death of whom he feels he should expiate by sacrifice, are clearly brought out. All these factors operate also, it is reasonable to suppose, on the minds of savages, and if anything more strongly, for they are more easily excited than we.

After describing how he found himself fallen exhausted into a shell-hole in No-Man's Land, during the course of a night-raid, in the company of a dying French soldier, whom he had mortally stabbed, the autobiographist, a German private soldier, continues :

" It is early morning, still and grey. . . . The body

lies still, but in the eyes there is such an extraordinary expression of flight that for a moment I think they have power enough to carry the body off with them. Hundreds of miles away with one bound. . . . All the life is gathered together in them for one tremendous effort to flee, gathered together there in a dreadful terror of death, of me.

"These hours . . . but how slowly a man dies. . . . Every gasp lays my heart bare. . . . By noon I am groping on the outer limits of reason. This is the first man I have killed with my hands, whom I can see close at hand, whose death is my doing. . . .

"In the afternoon he is dead. . . .

"It is mad what I do. But I must do something. I prop the dead man up again. . . . My state is getting worse, I can no longer control my thoughts. . . .

"The silence spreads. I talk and must talk. So I speak to him and say to him: 'Comrade, I did not want to kill you. If you jumped in here again, I would not do it, if you would be sensible too. . . . Forgive me, comrade. We always see it too late. How could you be my enemy? Take twenty years of my life, comrade, and stand up—take more, for I do not know what I can even attempt to do with it now.'

"My brain is taxed beyond endurance. This dead man is bound up with my life, therefore I must do everything, promise everything, in order to save myself: with wet lips I try to placate him—and deep down in me lies the hope that I may buy myself off in this way . . . it is a little stratagem: if only I am allowed to escape, then I will see to it. . . .

"By afternoon I am a little calmer. . . . The madness

passes. . . . I think no more of the dead man, he is of no consequence to me now. With one bound the lust to live flares up again and everything that has filled my thoughts goes down before it. . . . And now I hardly understand it myself any more. 'It was only because I had to lie there with him so long,' I say. 'After all, war is war.' "

I suggest, in the light of the above European analogy, that the native custom which requires the slayer to remain in solitude for a period before it is considered safe for him to return to his community, and which thus gives him time to brood over and become introspective in relation to his act of killing, may well have been one of the causes which led to the practice of performing elaborate propitiatory gestures and prayers as a religious ritual by slayers of men or animals, regarded as equally endowed with personality.

On the conclusion of the ritual thus performed in seclusion the Kwotto hunter, if he were in the habit of analysing his emotions (which he is not), on being asked by a European why he performed it, might well say with the German soldier: "And now I hardly understand it myself any more. It was only because I was obliged to remain alone with my thoughts near the corpse so long. After all, hunting is hunting and war is war."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Hunting, Fishing & Food Taboos

INDIVIDUAL hunters among the Kwottos make use of various types of game pits and traps to aid them in the killing of the larger wild animals.

Of more importance to the community as a whole, however, are the communal hunting battues, held periodically, in which all the men from several neighbouring villages take part together.

Each kindred usually has its own hunting boundaries, and those whose preserves are to be hunted over are constituted the leaders of the hunt. The latter are entitled to a portion of each animal killed, but in their turn they owe a portion to the local chief, from whom they hold their hunting rights. For within the limits of a village, and even within wider limits, there is no absolute individual ownership of land. The land is held in trust by the political chief for the community, and leased out by him to families for as long as tribal custom may hold them to justify their tenure.

For the purpose of the hunt a central space is cleared by burning. Animals are then driven into it by beaters from the surrounding bush. They are easily seen by the hunters encircling the open space, although not necessarily so easily brought down.

Bows, arrows and dogs are used. The magical preparation of the bows and arrows for the fray is a matter of great importance to the success of the

enterprise. But this is not all, for the hunter has to put himself into a fit state to handle his weapons after their being thus saturated with spiritual potency.

To this end the conscientious hunter abstains from sexual intercourse for a considerable time before the hunt; otherwise his touch would spoil the efficacy of his weapons. No woman is allowed to touch the latter for the same reason. Should she do so, it is believed that she herself would become afflicted with a skin disease which would cause her continually to scratch herself in much the same way as a person might be scratched with an arrow.

After returning from a hunt, men commonly eschew sexual relations for the space of up to two months. A breaking of this taboo, it is believed, would result in illness. These restrictions appear to belong to the same category as those which require a man to abstain from touching women both before and after attending corn-god ceremonies. The idea in both cases seems to be that as a result of contact with spiritual influences—as, for example, the corn-god, the souls of slain animals or the spirits of magico-religious "medicines"—a man becomes saturated with a dangerous potency.

Women, similarly, owing to the association of spiritual influences with blood, are held to be charged in a spiritually dangerous manner, more especially at certain times. Hence it is prudent to allow some of the man's potency to "wear off," as it were, before he resumes contact with women, lest mutual damage should be done.

The magico-religious ceremony of preparing the hunting "medicine" or poison and applying it to the

bow as well as the arrow is performed in secret in his private hut by each individual hunter. It is believed that the medicine, if properly consecrated, will have the property of attracting him to the game as well as the game to him, of preventing it from running away fast when attacked, and also of causing its death when hit.

The local Toto medicine for applying to arrows is called "*uhaha*." It is prepared in an antelope horn by crushing the leaves of certain plants and the bark of certain trees into a powder, and adding palm-oil, pepper and ginger. The names of the Sky God, the ancestral spirits and that of the particular shaman, named Uhaha, who first revealed the rites to man are invoked, to the accompaniment of the sacrifice of a fowl which is held over the horn so that its blood falls on the contents. There is a tradition that a man of Audilawa from Kano, called Borogo, who settled among the Kwottos in the time of the early ancestors of the tribe, introduced the use of *uhaha*.

The medicine used for the bow is called "*egeki*," and is prepared from powdered *egeki* leaves mixed up with the entrails of a porcupine. In addition to smearing their bows with it, hunters commonly carry some of this magical medicine about with them in their hunting-haversack, for use during a battue.

The distribution of the kill is determined by well-recognised rules. Each man is entitled to dispose of each animal which his arrow kills. If his arrow first wounds an animal and it then runs away and another kills it, the first man to hit it is regarded, for distributive purposes, as the actual killer, and allowed to claim it—that is, provided his arrow has remained in the animal,

—irrespective of how many other arrows may have subsequently entered it or where the animal may eventually have died. In such circumstances the first man retains the head of the game, but he customarily gives the others something—for example, the neck. The head is invariably the perquisite of the killer, but the hide, the shoulders and the hams are regarded as the portions due to the leaders of the hunt. Relatives-in-law of the leaders of the hunt, although necessarily of a different totem clan to the latter, are exempt from the obligation thus to pay for the privilege of hunting. For if any payment from them were accepted, the wives of the hunt leaders would feel insulted.

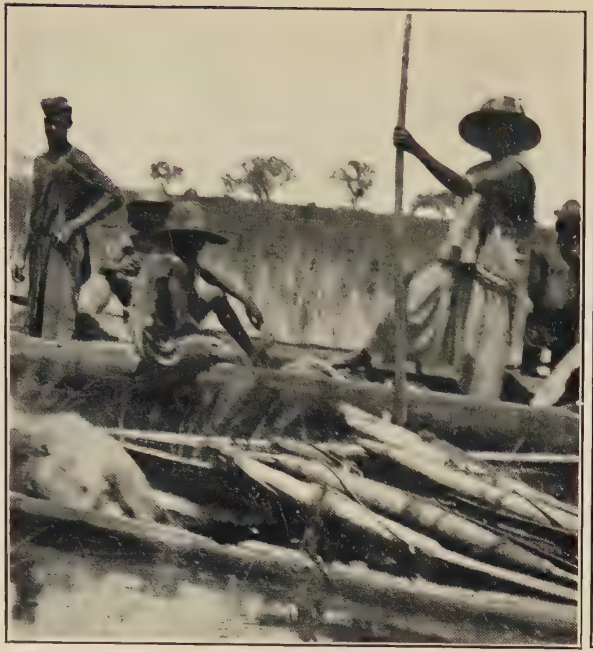
Another sport often carried out, like hunting, in a communal fashion is that of fishing. Fishermen are to be found in most villages where there are any pools or rivers worth fishing.

The largest fish caught in the Kwotto districts are obtained in the largest river, the Benue. Here, in addition to the Kwottos, professional fishermen belonging to other tribes come in the season.

They settle on some sandbank or island in the river, where they establish their headquarters for the time being.

The fishing rights belong to the local natives, who accordingly receive rent from the invading fishermen. Large catches are often made. The fish are smoked and dried on the spot and sold in distant native markets.

One of the annual difficulties of the Administration is—or at any rate was, at the time to which I refer—to organise a satisfactory system of checking itinerant fishers, and in fact travellers of every description,



HUNTING ON THE NIGER

HUNTERS IN CANOES RETURNING FROM A HARPOON HUNT ON THE NIGER SWAMPS.

FULANI CATTLE.

CATTLE FORM THE MAIN SOURCE OF WEALTH OF THE NOMAD FULANI. THEY ARE REVERED BY THEIR OWNERS WHO WOULD DIE RATHER THAN KILL THEIR CATTLE FOR FOOD.

moving up and down the Benue during the fishing season. Some system of checking was necessary in connection with the assessment and collection of income-tax due from all individuals to the Native Administration in respect of profits, often large, derived from the fishing industry.

This difficulty was confined to the large rivers. In the small rivers and pools of the Kwotto districts fishing is practically limited to the local inhabitants.

For the purpose of both kinds of fishing, nets are used, those employed by the professional fishers being of a heavier type than those used by casuals. Both professional and casual fishermen "doctor" their nets with a magical "medicine" in order that the fish may be attracted into them in a somewhat similar manner to the way in which hunters "doctor" their bows and arrows. They hide their various medicines in the roofs of their private huts, where the women will not set eyes on them.

I have on various occasions stayed in such huts when touring the Benue during the fishing season. Their interiors, as regards numbers and variety of gadgets hanging about, resemble nothing so much as a Christmas-decorated nursery. In appearance, however, such objects are mostly gory messes, plastered over with food-offerings and caked with the congealed blood of sacrifices. The reason for concealing them is analogous to that given for concealing hunting medicines—namely, that it is dangerous to allow women to associate themselves in any way with the magico-religious practices connected with the occupations of men.

Like hunters, also, serious fishers often abstain

from sexual intercourse for a time before and after fishing.

The catching of the larger fish is chiefly, if not entirely, in the hands of males, but women and children often take part in fishing battues in the smaller rivers and pools. On these occasions baskets, bags and calabashes are used by the latter in addition to their own nets, which are of a smaller pattern than those used by men.

Most of the rivers in the Kwotto districts are infested with crocodiles. Consequently at Toto, which is situated on the River Kunama, advantage is taken of the fact that the Village Head is also the chief of the crocodile-totem clan, and therefore able to use his influence to obtain protection for the fishers from these saurians. The Village Head goes to the river-side and, with appropriate prayers and invocations, summons the crocodiles to the bank to partake of the sacrifice which he offers them. He then sits by while they eat the food given them. The children who have come down to watch the spectacle of feeding the crocodiles meanwhile play about unconcernedly close to the great brutes. The Village Head, in exchange for his good offices in interceding with the crocodiles, receives a proportion of the fish caught in local battues. If seeing is believing, there is no doubt of the power of the Village Head to call the crocodiles, or of their truly remarkable tameness, for the crocodile-clan chief was kind enough to give me a personal demonstration.

A few years previous to my visit a certain tame crocodile used to crawl regularly all the way from the river to Toto market, a distance of about half-a-mile.

There it would bask in the sun surrounded by its human neighbours pursuing their ordinary avocations quite unconcernedly. As authority for this statement I have not only the asseverations of numerous natives who have seen it, but also the testimony of a European eyewitness, one of my predecessors in charge of the Keffi Division. This crocodile, unfortunately, came to an untimely end, being killed by a Mohammedan native, who did not stand in religious awe of it, much to the annoyance of the local inhabitants.

Since this incident the crocodiles have discontinued their "matey" market customs. Worse, on occasion they become positively unfriendly, judging from the fact that while I was on tour in the Kwotto districts I heard that several persons had had limbs bitten off, and one man had been bitten clean in two, by crocodiles in the River Kunama. This, however, did not shake the faith of the inhabitants in the essentially benevolent disposition of their own crocodile relatives. The incidents were explained as due to the intrusion into the local waters of bewitched stranger animals. The Village Head Toto accordingly gave orders that hunters should endeavour to exterminate the intruders as expeditiously as possible. Such incidents serve to show how difficult it is to disturb the cherished animistic beliefs of the natives, on account of the ease with which conflicting evidence can be explained away to the satisfaction of devout believers, taught no doubt, on the whole sincerely, by their fetish-priests to condemn any scientific inquiry into magico-religious matters as heresy calculated to harm the community.

A further conservative tendency in the regulation of

the life of the people tending to restrict individual initiative and experiment is to be found in the fact that fishing, like hunting and sowing, and in fact all occupations for which a magico-religious preparation is deemed necessary to success, has its appointed times. Omens have to be taken and augurs consulted before undertaking such enterprises, and none may move in the matter until the priest has declared the occasion to be propitious.

These regulations are very generally adhered to, for they are backed by the most tyrannical of all sanctions, religious fear. For who dare disobey a rule when by so doing one will lay oneself open to an accusation of being the cause of all manner of evil befalling one's neighbours?

The catalogue of the principal types of magico-religious regulations, which serve to adjust the relations of the Kwottos with the animal world, has now been nearly exhausted. It has been seen that totem clansmen —for example, those of the crocodile clan—periodically hold friendly intercourse with, and seek by presents to gain the favours of, their totem animals, and that they refrain from eating them. Reference has also been made to the practice of hunters and fishers performing propitiatory ceremonies in connection with the larger wild animals, and ceremonially eating particular portions of the slain, to ward off the danger attendant on killing them.

There remains a class of food observances—namely, various prohibitions on eating the flesh of various animals—the precise psychological basis of which is uncertain. Some—for example those forbidding clans-

men to eat certain food which the totem animal does not eat — seem to be associated with totemic beliefs. Others, especially those imposed on enceinte women, appear to be based rather on the idea of what has been called "contagious" or "sympathetic" magic acting on the body or on the unborn child. On the other hand some of these observances may not be magico-religious at all, but be founded on principles conceived of as genuinely scientific (*i.e.* on mistaken scientific theories based on superficial observation or inaccurate deduction), or they may conceivably rest on purely sentimental sanctions.

The following are the principal food taboos practised by the Kwottos other than the prohibition to eat their sacred animals imposed on totem clansmen.

Members of the leopard clan are forbidden to eat the flesh of certain creatures, on the ground that the leopard does not eat them. The prohibition does not apply to members of other clans.

Persons belonging to the crocodile clan will not eat any food which has been prepared on the place in the house where it is customary to light the fire, even if there is no fire burning at the time. The reason given is that one of the clan ancestors once left a bowl of porridge (*tuwo*) on the fireplace on a day when there was no fire, and when he returned he found two baby crocodiles on it.

Members of the Negbaki (defender-of-towns god) cult, who fence off the path on one side of their shrines with thorny twigs of the Gaude tree, will never eat food cooked on a fire on which Gaude twigs have been burned. They consider they would thereby insult the ancestor who founded the rites.

Members of the python clan are forbidden to eat any food left over from the previous day, the reason being that once, in the history of the ancestors of the clan, food left in the cooking-hut overnight was eaten by four men and all died suddenly. It was believed that a practitioner of black magic, who would naturally choose the time of darkness for his nefarious practices, had tampered with it.

Lastly, there are a number of food prohibitions in connection with enceinte women. Thus they are not allowed to eat any food from any other household excepting their own, with the sole exception of native biscuits (*akara*). Otherwise, it is thought, they will expose themselves to the danger of having a miscarriage. Women are also prohibited from eating monkey or baboon flesh when in this condition, but they may eat it at other times. The flesh of the Ohudu bird, eggs and honey are forbidden to pregnant women, and in general to all young females.

Eggs and honey are prohibited also to young boys. The reason given is that if they are allowed to acquire a taste for such delicacies in their youth they will always be causing trouble by trying to steal them from other people.

Another reason assigned for prohibiting an enceinte woman from eating these delicacies is to prevent her children from inheriting a precocious gluttonous tendency in the same direction.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Witch-Doctors & Medicine-Men

WITCH-DOCTORS and medicine-men, as is well known, fulfil for tribes in an early stage of cultural development functions analogous to those performed for more civilised peoples by priest and doctor.

The reason for the combination of the two functions among the Kwottos will readily be appreciated when it is explained that practically all physical or mental disease, as also many everyday happenings, seem to be regarded as at least as much due to spiritual as to physical causes. Almost all things classified by us as inanimate are considered by the Kwottos and their pagan neighbours either as animated by individual spirits or at least as charged with spiritual influence by virtue of which what we should call physical reactions are brought about, but in the absence of which it is idle to expect any normal results.

As an illustration of this general mode of thought one might instance the current Kwotto belief in regard to childbirth. It is known that a prior union of the sexes is necessary to childbirth and that the period of gestation is usually about nine months, but it is believed that unless the spirit of an ancestor consents to enter the womb there will be no conception.

Thus barren women, or women whose children have died in infancy, seek the aid of practitioners of the

spiritistic or occult art, either to mediate with the ancestor spirits regarded as responsible for this calamity or at least to diagnose the spiritual cause of them and prescribe appropriate penitentiary or placatory conduct.

Having regard to these spiritistic premises, it is easy to see why among the Kwottos to-day the professions of witch-doctor, or fetish-priest (the latter expression being a closer translation of the native term), and medicine-man are still held in considerable repute. The followers of these professions are the trusted custodians of tribal philosophy and practice; the champions of the tested native old against the untested European new; and as such they appeal to all the conservative elements in the community.

The Kwottos themselves have two terms to describe magico-religious practitioners: *oheku*, which means a man who operates with an *eku*; and *onyekikwa*, which means a man who operates with an *ekikwa*. This does not mean, however, that an *oheku* is debarred from operating with an *ekikwa* or an *onyekikwa* is prevented from using an *eku*. All that can be said is that an *oheku* has more to do with things classed as *eku* than *ekikwa*, and an *onyekikwa* with things classed as *ekikwa* than *eku*.

The term *ekikwa* can, I think, best be translated by the word "fetish," in the sense of "any material object regarded with religious awe on account of its association with a spiritual being."

I have purposely used a general expression, such as "association," for my experience is that there is a lack of agreement between individuals as to the precise nature of the association postulated. Some, for example,

would seem to regard it as intermittent (*i.e.* as subsisting only for the actual duration of the magico-religious ceremonies in which the fetish is used, or under certain conditions); while others would appear to view it as permanent. Some, again, would appear to regard the association as transcendent (*i.e.* they regard the fetish as primarily a symbol); while others would seem to view it as immanent (*i.e.* the fetish is to them an actual dwelling-place of a spirit).

The above is a wider definition of the word "fetish," I am aware, than that favoured by some modern writers on West Africa, but one which I find myself in agreement with Miss Mary Kingsley in considering not wider than is warranted by the native beliefs and the derivation of the word. Concerning the latter she says: "These worthy voyagers [*i.e.* the Portuguese explorers of the fifteenth century] noticed the veneration paid by Africans to certain objects, trees, fish, idols and so on, very fairly compared these objects with the amulets, talismans, charms and little images of the saints they themselves used, and called those things similarly used by the Africans *feitiço*, a word derived from the Latin *factitius*, in the sense of 'magically artful.'"[1] That some writers in the past have been foolish enough to suppose that the African venerates his fetish objects for their own sake, and does not recognise the existence of spirits associated with them, seems no argument against employing the word in its original Roman sense.

Among the Kwottos the spiritual beings associated with the different fetishes are not all of equal grade, and it is for this reason that the objection has been recently raised that to use any one descriptive term to

cover the different grades of spirits, or fetishes associated with them, "is to ignore and do violence to the African's own thought."[2] Against this objection I would point out, firstly, that, when the African, as in the present instance, does, in fact, use such a descriptive term, it seems desirable to follow suit in translation. Secondly, is not this precisely what we ourselves do?—namely, we use one descriptive term (*i.e.* "spirit") to cover a number of different grades of supernatural beings, including, for example, those denoted by the words "God," "angel," "saint," "ghost," "soul" and "fairy."

I know of no Kwotto terms corresponding to the Ashanti *abosom* or *suman* to denote superior and inferior grade fetishes; but, from the fact that some fetishes regarded as superior are normally referred to only as *eku*, while others regarded as inferior are called either *eku* or *ekikwa*, I infer that the word *ekikwa* may have meant originally "inferior *eku*"—a sense which it has not entirely lost. On the basis of this distinction one might say, as a very rough guide, that the spirits from which superior fetishes derive their power seem to be associated more especially with the more powerful or useful objects in nature, mostly belonging to the animal kingdom. For example, they may be the deified ghosts of human beings or animals, or a spirit associated with certain crops. Those giving power to the inferior fetishes, on the other hand, are connected with certain lower-grade objects in nature, which may belong to the animal, vegetable or even the mineral kingdom. This is roughly the distinction which Captain Rattray draws between the *abosom* and *suman* of the Ashanti.[3] In

addition to spirits thus connected with objects in nature there are also numerous independent spirits of various grades, corresponding to the angels, fairies and so on of European belief.

The meaning of the second Kwotto term used to describe magico-religious objects—*ekikwa*—is, like *eku*, difficult to fit in to any scientific European category. I propose to translate it as "medicine." *Ekikwa* means "medicine" in the wide sense of "any material substance which has the power to effect a remedy." It is applied without distinction to what we should distinguish on the one hand as magico-religious sacraments, which effect remedies through the power of religious faith; and on the other as scientific medicines, which effect remedies by virtue of their natural physical properties.

Although an *onyekikwa* may thus in the course of his duties handle both religious and scientific *ekikwa*, there seems no doubt that there is a clear distinction in his own mind between the two. In other words, the difference between magic and science is recognised. For those "medicines" which are made only in the course of a magico-religious ceremony he also calls *eku*; while those conceived as possessed naturally of medicinal virtue he simply calls *ekikwa*.

But this does not mean that the scientific theories of the "medicine-man" concerning the therapeutic action of his scientific medicines agrees with any modern European medical theory. On the other hand, their therapeutic action is regarded as due, not to any chemical or organic process, but to what has been called "dynamism," or the action of the spirit or spiritual

" properties naturally " dwelling in the medicine on the spirit which has caused the disease.

I have no detailed information regarding the composition of scientific *ekikwa*—mostly herbal, apparently —used by *onyekikwa*, but shall have something to say about the composition and use of *eku-ekikwa* (*i.e.* fetish medicines) in the following chapter.

The supernatural power which all magico-religious practitioners are credited with possessing is regarded as derived from the spirits or spiritual forces controlling their rites and associated with their fetish-objects or medicines.

The power thus acquired by the first practitioner, it is believed, can be transmitted only by heredity, by voluntary gift, or by sale. It cannot be stolen against the will of the possessor. Therefore it is useless for an outsider to think that he can make a copy of a fetish for himself and operate with it. For such fetish would lack the spiritual potency to be obtained only from contact with a properly consecrated fetish. Further, the would-be operator would not possess the supernatural power necessary to make the rite effective.

When a man learns the secret of the composition of a fetish-object and the procedure connected with it, and with this knowledge obtains the supernatural power to be derived from association with the spirit of the fetish, the novitiate has to fulfil certain obligations to his teacher.

During the original proprietor's lifetime he is obliged to ask his permission and give him thanksgiving presents before invoking the spirit of the fetish—a royalty, as it were, on the novitiate's earnings as a fetish-priest.

After the original shaman's death he has to carry out the same procedure at the latter's grave—that is to say, he must propitiate the shaman's ghost by sacrifice there.

If the grave is at a distant place he need not actually go to it, but may visit it, as it were, in the spirit. This is done by proceeding beyond the boundaries of the village to the vicinity of the meeting of the cross-roads. There, facing the road leading to the village where his benefactor was buried, the shaman offers up a sacrifice of a fowl and beer to him. The portion of the sacrifice which is not consumed by the offerer is buried in a hole in the ground close to where the sacrifice was performed.

This sacrifice by the receiver to the giver of a fetish is quite distinct from the sacrifice which has to be made to the spirit of the fetish before invoking its aid. Similarly two separate thanksgiving sacrifices have to be performed if the aid sought from the spirit is vouchsafed. One is made to the spirit of the fetish in the presence of the fetish in the practitioner's home; and the other to the donor of the fetish-object at the benefactor's grave or without the town according to circumstances.

In the following chapter a number of examples of actual Kwotto magical rites will be described in detail. Before giving the examples it may not be amiss to refer briefly to some of the theories which exist as to the origin of magical rites in general, and to give the writer's tentative conclusions in regard to the Kwotto data in particular.

It has been remarked by Professor A. R. Radcliffe-Brown that there are at present two different and opposing tendencies in the study of primitive culture.

"One view," he notes, "by far the most popular, regards culture purely from the historical point of view, and attempts, in the absence of any historical records, to multiply and elaborate hypothetical reconstructions of an unknown past." After referring to the tendency of various writers he adds: "However much these writers seem to differ from one another they all agree in treating the facts of culture as being primarily, if not entirely, material to be used in the making of conjectural history. The other tendency, best represented in England by Malinowski, is to treat each culture as a functionally interrelated system, and to endeavour to discover the general laws of function for human society as a whole. It does not neglect the historical point of view, but regards the processes of social change as something to be studied by actual observation over a period, or by the use of authentic and detailed records. It does not reject history, but only hypothetical history."[4]

Without asserting that the alternative theories of the origin of magic which I summarise below are held in detail by any of the authorities mentioned, it may be said that the two opposing tendencies referred to are manifest especially in the study of magical phenomena.

A "historical" school exists which regards magic as a serious system of philosophy, and claims that, by analysing examples of magical rites collected from different parts of the world, "laws" of "primitive logic" can be deduced.

These "laws of magic"—or "mystic associations," as they have been called—have been formulated as follows. Firstly: "Like acts on like and produces like,"

which forms the basis of what is termed "sympathetic" or "imitative" magic; secondly: "The part represents the whole and acts on the whole," giving rise to "contagious" magic; and thirdly: "The spoken wish produces the desired result." These mystic associations, as above formulated, are called by Dr H. A. Junod "the axioms of primitive mentality."[5]

A rival "functional" school of thought questions the validity of the assumption that any "laws of magic" or "mystic associations" exist, except as abstractions of scientific theorists, on the ground that, as a matter of fact, present-day practitioners of magic (and this certainly applies to Kwotto practitioners) do not claim that they arrive at, nor do they seek to justify their magical beliefs and practices by a reference to, analytically discovered laws. They justify their rites to themselves by a reference to the believed supernatural inspiration of the founder, and to the existence of "miracles" proving their supernatural efficacy. For the benefit of inquiring strangers a vague reference to superficially analogous practices is sometimes also made, in order to demonstrate the possibility of their having some hidden reasonable basis, the nature of which is not, however, understood at the present day by the disciples of the founder.

It is further observed by inquirers of the "functional" school that magical beliefs and rites, far from constituting for their practitioners a reasoned system of philosophy, are commonly called on by them either where their scientific knowledge fails or as a means of reinforcing it by the imparting of an emotional satisfaction.

In consideration of data of this nature it is maintained that an emotional rather than a logical explanation of the origin of magical rites seems to accord more with the nature of the phenomena.

Such an interpretation is afforded by the theory that the origin of many magical rites is to be sought in a series of dramatic acts, enacted more or less spontaneously under the exciting influence of intense emotion, rather than in a series of deliberate actions calmly and collectedly conceived on the basis of "laws" of "primitive logic."

Let us apply these rival theories to a concrete and typical Kwotto example. Take, for instance, the following:

Rites to kill an Enemy (*called "Aba"*).—The fetish-object used in these rites consists of a gourd containing charcoal obtained by burning various barks, leaves and roots, to the neck of which is attached by means of black thread a small iron prong. The following is the procedure to kill an enemy. Appropriate incantations and sacrifices have to be made at the various stages of operations. Take the iron prong and rub some of the "medicine" from the calabash over it, so as to renew its spiritual potency. Then take the prong to a Rimi tree and, after invoking the aid of the tree spirit and the *Aba* spirit, plunge the prong into the tree. At the same time utter the name of the enemy, coupled with the wish that when the *Aba* strikes the tree it may find the soul of the enemy therein and so cause the enemy to be struck with grievous harm and die.

If the tree starts to wither in a few days it will be taken as a sign that the body of the enemy is also

withering. If the enemy does not fall ill it will be explained as due, not to the impotence of the rite, but to the interposition of a more powerful spiritual force.

With regard to the above it will be noticed from a comparison of the *Aba* rite with the other rites described in the following chapter that certain features are common to nearly all the rites—such as the burning of various leaves, etc., to form a magical "medicine," and the performance of prayers and sacrifice. As these features would appear, therefore, to be of a more or less general character, it will be unnecessary to inquire into their origin or function for the purpose of the particular study of the elements peculiar to the *Aba* rite. It may be of interest in passing, however, to note that the burning of incense and sacred trees and plants in magico-religious ceremonial in other parts of the world (*e.g.* Assyro-Babylonia, Ancient Egypt and the Pacific) has been variously interpreted as intended to assist either the production of inspiration or the exorcism of evil spirits or influences.[6]

A follower of the "historical" school of thought might, I imagine, conceive the particular portions of the *Aba* rite as having been seriously and calmly built up by a man arguing to himself somewhat as follows:

"I hate so-and-so, my enemy, and wish to kill him. Therefore, since I know that like acts on like and produces like, I will imitate what I want to happen and go through the motions of stabbing with a sharp instrument. An iron prong will do as well as anything. Secondly, since I know that the spoken wish produces the desired result, I will utter a wish that my enemy may die."

Such a procedure is obviously "primitively logically" correct, and would therefore, according to the principles of the "historical" school, commend itself to the intelligence of a "primitive" man as likely "naturally" to achieve its object in the same way as a logically conceived modern scientific course of action, designed to effect the same purpose, would to a "civilised" man.

A follower of the "functional" school of thought, on the other hand, would examine the function which the enactment of the *Aba* rite performed for the practitioner. The practitioner would initially be assumed to be a human being of a known type and not a person with a hypothetical "primitive logical" mentality.

Taking an "ordinary" man as a basis of argument, it might be asked: "What would such a man do when worked up into an uncontrollable passion against someone on account of some grievous wrong suffered at his hands?" And it might be answered: "Firstly, a man in such a position might, in an explosion of righteous anger, invoke the name of the Deity and mumble wishes that his enemy might die a violent death. Secondly, he might, under the influence of an ungovernable savage temper, do violent damage to anything in the vicinity that reminded him, by means of some association, of his enemy. For example, if a particular stumpy or tall tree happened to strike him in his temporary madness as oddly resembling the body of the latter, he might conceivably kick or hit it, at the same time mumbling further curses against his enemy."

Suppose that a dramatic "scene" of this nature were followed, by a coincidence, by the violent death

of the enemy, in an environment such as that of the Kwottos, what would be the effect on the principal actor?

The Kwotto environment is one of superstition and ignorance, where men commonly have a strong faith in the existence of spiritual beings, credited with the ability to hear the requests of the living and of interfering capriciously with the established order of things in answer to such prayers—beliefs which I am not suggesting are absent from our own religion. It would, in such circumstances, be easy for a simple and uneducated savage to regard the particular procedure which he had happened on this particular occasion to follow as thus proved, by the actual result, to have been an effective means of obtaining the fulfilment of his wishes through the mediumship of the supernatural beings whom he had invoked in his passion and who had thus brought about the just destruction of his wicked enemy.

Owing to the believer's natural inability to analyse the relative supernatural values of the different elements of the procedure, prudence would prompt him to dramatise his wishes in exactly the same manner when a similar supernatural result, justified by a similar moral sanction, was again desired.

It is a most noteworthy feature of the Kwotto beliefs that for the practice of "white" or "orthodox" (*i.e.* socially sanctioned) magical rites to be effective the purpose must be morally justified. Such magical rites will help only the morally worthy, moral worth being usually gauged by conformity or nonconformity to the usages of the cult or society, and similarly can do harm

only to those deserving of punishment. A "good" man has nothing to fear from practitioners of "black" magic, and a "bad" man tampering with "white" magic would find himself supernaturally punished by thus profanely meddling with sacred things. Translating this concept into technical anthropological terminology, one might say of a fetish-medicine, as Captain Rattray says of the Ashanti *suman*: "The power or spirit which animates it is sensitive—any breaking of the taboos associated with it nullifies its virtue." [7]

"Black" or "unorthodox" (*i.e.* not socially sanctioned) magical rites are similarly bound up with moral concepts, for they are regarded as efficient to harm the wicked but not the good. Individual members of "orthodox" cults fear to patronise publicly—but will resort in secret to—custodians of evil fetishes or medicines, apparently feeling morally justified if their intention is to be revenged on the guilty, but feeling afraid to invoke them against persons conceived to be innocent.

This moral aspect of magic is a marked feature of the Kwotto phenomena, and seems to furnish an important clue to the solution of the problem of the relation of magic to religion and science.

The evidence, in my view, does not support the theory that magic "is the science of primitive man" (Astley [8]), or that the "fundamental conception" of magic "is identical with that of modern science" (Frazer [9]), or that "magic is science, in most respects of a very primitive kind" (Talbot [10]), as the "historical" school assert, but, on the other hand, it is compatible

with the assumption that the sets of phenomena are mutually complementary and functionally distinct in all cultures, both ancient and modern.

The moral aspect of the subject indeed appears to receive no recognition from the "historical" school. This is possibly accounted for, firstly, by the fact that, being a subjective aspect, it cannot be objectively observed, but elicited only through close and sympathetic touch with natives; secondly, by the pernicious influence which theories (otherwise useful) of the form of conjectural history may, in fact, exert on the work of the field ethnologist; and, thirdly, by certain branches of magic having sometimes been studied in cultures where they have become decadent and socially discredited, surviving only as empty husks from which all moral life has departed.

Whatever the reason may be for the omission, the fact seems clear that this school has endeavoured to deduce hypothetical history by the analysis of a limited number of the total features of magical rites, divorced from their context, and without reference to the special circumstances attending their enactment, the actual functions which they perform for their devotees or the incidental beliefs associated with them; all of these subjects, in the view of the "functional" school of thought, it is essential to study in detail in their living native setting in order to arrive at an adequate appreciation of the phenomena.

The above suggested alternative explanations of the possible origin of the *Aba* rite may perhaps serve to indicate the nature of the difference in conception of the two schools as to the origin and function of magic,

and so assist the non-specialist reader to appraise the significance of the Kwotto magico-religious rites to be referred to in the following chapter.

NOTES

[1] M. H. Kingsley, *West African Studies*, pp. 97, 98.

[2] *Cp.* "E. W. S.," in the *Journal of the African Society*, vol. xxvi., No. CIV., p. 405, July 1927.

[3] R. S. Rattray, *Religion and Art in Ashanti.*

[4] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, article in *Man*, vol. xxix., No. 3, March 1928.

[5] H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe* (1927).

[6] Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (abridged edition), pp. 95, 195, 337.

[7] *Cp.* R. S. Rattray, *Religion and Art in Ashanti.*

[8] Canon H. J. D. Astley, *Biblical Anthropology* (1929), p. 212.

[9] Sir J. G. Frazer, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

[10] P. A. Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, vol. ii., p. 154.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Love-Potions, Charms & Black Magic

IN the previous chapter certain mutually antagonistic views concerning the nature and origin of magic have been discussed. It is now proposed to describe a number of actual Kwotto magical rites, with the object of furnishing the reader with some detailed material for examination in the light of them.

It will be observed that in most of the following examples private selfish purposes are more prominent than consideration for the common-weal, and, in consequence, such rites are normally performed in private. There are other magical rites, however — associated more particularly with fire-spirit, tree-spirit and corn-spirit cults, and the cults of the public fetishes—in which the purpose is rather the public than the private advantage, and which are habitually performed as corporate ceremonies.

Rites to obtain a Woman's Love (called "Hashiri").— Take the heart of a dog, a male and a female stinging ant, bark of a tree called Kokorokaba, nail-parings from the feet and hands of the lovesick man, as also hair from his eyebrows. Make the above into a powder, and call on the spiritual being associated with the rite with invocations, accompanied by the sacrifice of a fowl and beer, to impart of his spiritual influence to the fetish-medicine. Contrive to administer to the woman, no matter whether virgin or married woman, and she will

then become infatuated with the practitioner and follow him like a dog.

Rites to obtain Childbirth.—There is no special god of childbirth, as among some other tribes. The household gods are invoked, and through them the ancestral ghosts. A matron desiring to obtain a child will sacrifice a full-grown hen to the spirits, while a virgin being desirous of being found with child, when her time comes, sacrifices a fowl which is not old enough to lay. Thanksgiving offerings are made to the spirits after delivery.

Rites to prevent Danger from the Ganagana Tribe. (*called "Awariha"*).—The following is the procedure for making the Awarika fetish-object. Incantations and sacrifices have to be performed at appropriate stages of the operations. Collect the bark, leaves and roots of various trees and plants, including the Ogumade, Gobia, Ohi, Leba and Tsamia trees. Reduce these to charcoal by burning, and place in a gourd. Tie the gourd round with a strip of white cloth and cowries, and drive iron staples into the body of the gourd. After sacrificing a fowl to the fetish stick the feathers of the sacrifice round the strip of white cloth on the neck of the gourd as a reminder to the spirit that sacrifice has been performed. The fetish-object is now complete.

Should a man intend to go among Ganaganas he would be well advised, in addition to invoking the aid of the Awarika spirit before starting, to sew up some of the magical mixture from inside the fetish-object into a piece of leather and wear this as a charm on his arm. Should he return from his visit to the Ganaganas unharmed he should sacrifice a goat and two cocks and

two pots of beer to the spirit Awarika as a sign of his gratitude. The exact amount of offering due as thanks could be obtained with mathematical exactitude by consulting a diviner, should there be any doubt.

There is a special dance, known as the Anyiriku dance, associated with the Awarika worship. This is performed by devotees, both men and women, on occasions of sacrifice, in the courtyard of the custodian priests. The dance is accompanied by joyous wailing, the music being supplied by shaking gourds hung round with pods, so as to produce a clattering noise.

As to the reason for the existence of a fear of the Ganaganas it is noteworthy that smithying in the Toto and surrounding districts is practically exclusively in their hands. A superstitious dread of iron may thus account for the dread of the Ganaganas by the Kwottos. It is significant that iron staples are driven into the gourd. The Ganaganas are credited with the power of rendering themselves invisible to aid their nefarious practices.

Some Kwottos consider that if they were to receive money from a Ganagana—*e.g.* as change—and were then to buy food with it, the food might poison them unless they first warded off the danger by sacrificing to the Awarika.

Rites to obtain Protection from Enemies.—The following procedure must be carried out at the beginning of the eighth month. Take some of the bark and fruit of the Kadaura tree; add leaves from the Kankarubuta tree and bark from the Bagya tree, and some of the plants known as Karkashin Agwe. Then seek a sort of wooden club (*akuriki*) used for beating cloth, which has been

broken in use, and a knife which has been similarly broken. Mix up the whole in a large pot and add water. Place in the sun in the courtyard of the house, closing the mouth of the pot with another (inverted) pot, Plaster the line of junction of the two pots with earth so as to render them air-tight, and leave in the courtyard for seven days. On the eighth day at dawn call the male members of the kindred and give each a small part of the liquid in the pot to drink. Repeat the dose for fourteen days, and then, as from the fifteenth day, the participants will be proof against the weapons of their enemies. If a man shoots at them with an arrow it will break before it reaches him. If an enemy cuts at him with a sword, or tries to club him, the sword or club will break.

To make additionally sure of frustrating the power of enemies the following further rites may be performed. Seek a piece of wood of a kind that is used for the making of animal traps; also a powerful fish called the Ejere fish. Take the fish and the wood to the above-described medicine standing in the pot in the courtyard. Burn the wood and the fish and pour the resultant charcoal into a gourd. At the same time invoke, with appropriate sacrifice, the spirit of the above-described medicine in the gourd, which, on the conclusion of the rites, itself becomes a fetish-object with protective powers. Then take some of the magical medicine from the gourd and sew up in a small leather case to be worn on the arm or the body. After this, if a man aims a weapon at the wearer, the weapon-arm or body of the marksman will immediately wither up and die. If an enemy is charging him on a horse the wearer has but

to give the charm a twist and the legs of the horse will immediately likewise twist and double up.

Rites to pull out an Enemy's Tongue (*called "Golo"*).—Recourse is had to a fetish-object, previously prepared in the course of a magico-religious ritual, consisting of a gourd containing charcoal prepared from various trees and plants, to which is tied at the neck a small iron hook. The operating shaman, after making the necessary invocations and sacrifices to secure the aid of the spirit of the rite, removes the hook from the gourd and applies to it some of the magical medicine from the gourd. He then attaches the hook to some more or less flexible stationary object, such as a flexible twig or piece of rope forming part of a roof, and pulls the hook heavily down. At the same time he calls out the name of his enemy, and expresses the wish that, just as he is pulling down on the flexible twig, so may the tongue of his victim be pulled out of his mouth and the victim die. It is believed that, if the alleged wrongdoer is really in the wrong, this will actually occur, unless some more powerful fetish in the hands of some other shaman prevents its action.

Alternative Rites to kill an Enemy.—Take a cornstalk and, laying it beside a human corpse, take the measure of the latter with it. Then cut the stalk off the same length as the corpse. Add to the cornstalk the bark of a Henaki and a Lodumi tree, and burn the whole to a powder. Then take a small bow-shaped instrument, such as is used by women in the preparation of cotton, and an arrow-shaft. Apply the above powder to the arrow-shaft. Then sacrifice a fowl to the spirit of the rite, so that the blood of the sacrifice mixes with the powder.

After nightfall dip the tip of the arrow-shaft in a fire. Then take the bow and, stooping down behind the outer wall of the compound, discharge the arrow-shaft through one of the drain-holes cut in the base of the wall, at the same time uttering the name of the enemy. Although the practitioner from his side of the wall cannot see the path taken by the arrow-shaft, it is believed that the flaming shaft soars up to the sky and then descends to earth again in the form of a shooting star. It is further believed that, even if the shooting star does not fall on top of the enemy and kill him, it will at any rate mysteriously discharge some of its potent influence into his body and cause him to sicken and die.

Another method of killing an enemy—which also requires the presence of a corpse—is to extract the finger-nails from a corpse, grind them into a powder, and put them in the intended victim's beer, on drinking which he will surely die.

Rites to punish a Wife-Stealer (*called "Kokoko"*).—Take the sharp-pointed proboscis of a water-scorpion. Add a lizard and some camwood dye which has remained over from the anointing of the body of a dead woman; also some water which has come out of the mouth of a corpse, and some pepper. Make up the above into a powder. Then invoke the aid of the spirits of the rite, by sacrifice of a fowl and beer, to impart his spiritual potency to the fetish-medicine. Then contrive to administer to the wife-stealer. If the wife-stealer partakes of it he will become afflicted with a disease the symptoms of which will include profuse bleeding of the genital organs and will cause him to shriek with pain.

Rites to punish a Runaway Wife (*called "Ekigbohi"*).—Take the bark and leaves of the Kadaura, Ahenaki and Daudan Kajura trees and the root of the Ureba plant. Then seek a male burrowing-cricket (Hausa = *Gyare*); kill, crush and burn it, together with the above-mentioned herbal ingredients. Put the resultant charcoal in a gourd, and sacrifice a fowl and beer over the gourd to the spirit of the rite, in order that he may lend his aid in making the medicine potent.

The cricket must be a male one, and must be caught in the seventh month, when it is above-ground. It is of no use to catch it in its hole, together with its mate, which at this season of the year keeps in her hole and looks after her eggs.

To punish the runaway wife it is necessary to put some of the magical powder from the gourd on the road, and if the adulterous wife treads on it she will immediately be attacked by a wasting disease, which will cause her to cry out in agonies of pain. Neither her paramour nor anyone else will then want to have anything to do with a woman so afflicted.

Should she then decide, either of her own motion or on the advice of a diviner, to return to her husband, as her sole hope of cure, the latter, should he be willing to forgive her, will try to reverse the spell as follows:

He will collect all the same ingredients that went to make up the original fetish-medicine, without, however, burning them, place them in a pot and fill it up with water. He will then take his wife and the pot to the original fetish, and, invoking the spirit of the rite with a sacrifice—which the wife has to provide—will request

the spirit to reverse the evil effects of the first spell, as his wife is now repentant.

The husband will then give his returned wife the water from the pot, with instructions to drink it and wash her body with it for fourteen days, at the end of which period it is considered the sickness may leave her.

Rites to protect a Market from Evil Spirits (called "Zagin Agana").—On the establishment of a new market it is customary to erect a fetish-object, consisting of a stick, round which a bundle of several different kinds of leaves is tied, including the leaves of the Kujemi and locust-bean trees and a sort of grass called Retabori. A sacrifice of a goat and a fowl is made to the spirit associated with this object, the blood of the sacrifice being caused to fall on the leaves. A calabash of beer is also offered. Women are not allowed to witness these rites.

The object described above is regarded as a symbol of a spirit named Agana, two of whose chief functions are to prosper the corn crop and protect from witches. It is believed that wheresoever the Agana fetish-priests erect or bring out this object, with due ceremonial, there in a mystical sense will be found the Agana spirit, strong to protect the market from witches and evil spirits.

Rites to kill Stealers of Farm Produce (called the "Negbaki Rites").—Take a piece of broken calabash, some dog's teeth and the charred end of a piece of wood used in lighting a fire on the farm, and tie them up together. Add a piece of wood from the Gaude tree, and with appropriate incantations and sacrifice place the fetish-

object in a farm which it is desired to protect from thieves. Should the farmer find one day that someone has stolen some of his farm produce he will collect some firewood and burn it before the fetish-object, after pouring out a libation of beer to the latter. It is believed that the spirit of the fetish will then take possession of the thief, and on the next occasion on which he lights a fire it will force him to throw himself into the fire and so cause his death.

The above magico-religious rites are said to have been imported by the Kwottos from the Bassas. This would appear probable, as the Bassas eat dogs, and would consequently have a good supply of dogs' teeth. The Kwottos, on the other hand, do not as a rule eat dogs.

Needless to say, the use of the Negbaki fetish is not approved of by the fetish-priests of the (Kwotto) Agana corn-god cult, who consider the only orthodox fetish-object for protecting farms, at any rate corn-farms, to be a symbolical representation of the corn-god, consisting of a stick to the top of which a bunch of leaves is tied, duly consecrated by the Agana priest.

Rites to secure a Fruitful Crop (called the "Ikodo" Rites). —The shaman proceeds as follows.

After sowing his farm he goes to a large tree on it —or, failing a large tree, to a red-ant heap—bearing a sacrificial creature, usually a fowl. He then digs a hole in the ground near the base of the tree or ant-heap, in which he will afterwards bury what remains over of the sacrifice.

After slaying the latter so that the blood falls on the tree or ant-heap, as the case may be, and invoking

the aid of the spiritual being believed to be resident therein—said to be conceived as an ancestor ghost—the farmer cooks and eats the flesh ceremonially before leaving the spot. He then takes the water used in cooking the sacrifice and, having added to it various leaves to increase its potency, sprinkles it over his farm.

The practice of these fetish rites is not approved of by public opinion, who regard them as black magic, designed to conjure the fertility of neighbouring farms into the farm of the owner of the fetish. They are consequently carried out in secret, for otherwise neighbouring farmers would complain against the shaman.

Sufficient examples have perhaps now been given to indicate the general types of process employed by the Kwottos in the making of ritual objects and charms, the only essential difference between the two being that the former are set up somewhere, whereas the latter are worn on the person. It may safely be stated that ritual objects or charms exist for use as aids in all matters in which the careful treatment of spiritual beings is regarded as a factor in success—*e.g.* agriculture, fishing, hunting, trade, wars, the obtaining of childbirth, the curing of disease, and personal protection by night and day, in addition to such criminal occupations as stealing, murdering, and abduction of females.

Koranic charms are sometimes used side by side with pagan charms among Kwottos in districts into which Mohammedans have penetrated, and, conversely, Kwottos who have embraced Islam do not as a rule consider it necessary to discard all their pagan magico-

religious rites, but continue to practise much of their pagan religion while professing Mohammedanism.

In this respect it will be seen they do not differ from many European Christian peoples, who, while professing Christianity, believe at the same time in numerous superstitions of non-Christian origin.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Headhunting, Human Sacrifice & War Shrines

LIKE the Mama, Mada and Nungu tribes, referred to in a previous chapter, the Kwottos until a few years ago, when the custom was finally effectively suppressed by the Government, followed the practice of headhunting—that is to say, they were in the habit of severing the heads of enemies slain in battle.

The distribution of this custom in Northern Nigeria is of considerable interest. It is limited to a well-defined culture-area, which, with a few gaps, extends from east to west from Yola to Lokoja astride the Benue river and northwards from the Jukun country round about the Hausa town of Ibi, on the Benue, to the Jos Plateau (inclusive) and the southern borders of the Zaria Province.

The details of this distribution raises the interesting problem as to whether the custom among the different tribes has arisen as a result of independent invention in each case or whether it originated in one centre and spread thence over the entire area.

Connection in space is of course a particularly cogent argument in favour of diffusion because of its powerful presumption of accompanying communication. When a considerable number of tribes—to be exact, sixty-one, as at present officially listed [1]—in contiguous areas practise headhunting it would be absurd to dream of each having originated the custom for itself.

It is, of course, logically conceivable that headhunting was independently developed by two or three of the tribes in the culture-area, and then became diffused until the two or three areas of dispersion met and coalesced into one greater area. Yet the principle that economy of explanation is the best would militate even against this interpretation as compared with diffusion from a single centre unless there were definite indications in favour of a multiple origin; and these there do not seem to be.

The custom of headhunting appears to come to a more or less abrupt stop in Northern Nigeria on the banks of the Niger (with the exception of a small area immediately to the west of Lokoja), the country to the west of which belongs to the Yoruba culture-zone, inhabited by the Yoruba tribe proper and numerous sub-tribes of Yoruba affinity.

This is not to deny that other culture-traits may have been derived by the Kwottos from the Yoruba zone. But the practice of headhunting, which has been reported among the Idoma-speaking Okpotos, the Yoruba-speaking Igaras and the Igbiras, as well as the Jukuns, but not among the Yoruba proper, would appear to have been derived by the Kwottos either from the Okpotos or Igaras of Idah, whence they migrated, or from the Igbira-speaking peoples among whom they settled. The former supposition is the more probable.

Nothing definite is known concerning the origin of the custom in Northern Nigeria. The Government Anthropologist's latest published view is that "the headhunting rites of many of the Nigerian tribes would seem

to suggest an ancient connection with the culture of Indonesia, which was apparently also the home of the banana and xylophone." [2] But why, how or whence such contact may have been supposed to have been established is not discussed.

The postulated connection therefore remains undemonstrated. In its favour it might be argued that some of the inhabitants of Indo-Oceania are negroid and, consequently, an ancient connection is conceivable. But against it is the consideration that both the Oceanic and the West African areas share largely common environmental conditions. Both are regions of tropical forest, and possess humid climates — circumstances favourable to the use of the banana, the manufacture of wooden instruments and the growth of dark superstitions. This suggests the possibility that the above traits may have been developed independently, under the influence of similar conditions in both territories.

The question as to whether any or all of these culture-elements were originally indigenous to either area is, of course, quite another matter. This I hope to discuss in detail in a future book.

Head-severing among the Kwottos would appear, from the statements of my informants, to have had both a destructive and a constructive purpose. Both purposes were associated with the belief that, by capturing the skull, at least a portion of the pattern or "paternal soul" (*ekiti*), and with it the "virility-power" of the deceased, resident in the skull, was thereby acquired.

The destructive purpose of the custom was to deprive the enemy of the "paternal souls," or ghosts, and with

them the virility-power, of their deceased members. These would otherwise, from their coign of vantage in the rival community, continue to seek the discomfiture of their enemies.

The constructive purpose, on the other hand, was by the acquisition, together with the skulls, of the "paternal souls," or ghosts, and virility-power of outside societies to build up a sort of virility-power" reserve to be drawn on by the community as required.

It may appear at first sight strange that enemy—and therefore presumably vengefully inclined—ghosts could be of any use to their slayers. Such a seeming initial psychological difficulty is in practice overcome by the belief that it is possible by performing certain magico-religious purificatory rites, analogous to those performed by hunters to ward off the evil effects of slaying wild animals, to purge the ghost of its vengeful character. After that has been done the aid of the ghost resident in the captured enemy skull is, apparently, regarded as likely to be given to its worshippers in response to prayer and sacrifice, as that of other friendly spiritual beings.

A striking example of the practical application of this idea is to be found in the Igara custom whereby a headhunter propitiates the spirit of the warrior he has slain, annually, before he may eat the new yams, by pouring the blood of a sacrificed pullet over his enemy's skull.[3] Here there would appear to be clearly brought out the idea of expressing gratitude by sacrifice to the ghost, resident in the enemy skull, for his mystical contribution to the virility or fertilising power of the community, identified with the fertilising power of

nature, by means of which Mother Earth had been assisted in bringing forth a good yam crop.

The above seem to be the religious ideas underlying headhunting among the Kwottos and Igaras. The custom no doubt had also a political value, the ability to obtain the head of an enemy in personal combat constituting a convenient method of testing the prowess of individuals in war.

To those who returned from battle carrying the heads of their enemies fell the lion's share of booty captured, in slaves and material. A lad who returned from battle for the first time with a head would be formally admitted during the subsequent celebrations to the warrior rank, a distinction which conferred social prestige and, in particular, raised him in the regard of women. For example, the chief would often give his daughters—in the classificatory sense, including his brothers' daughters—in marriage to the most successful warriors: and, conversely, a youth who proved a coward in fight would have little chance of marrying.

The war-chief, bearing the title of "Oseji," had to produce numerous heads taken in battle before appointment to his high rank. He had also to maintain his prestige, for if he could not show a regular—say, at least, a weekly—supply of heads he lost his appointment, and one of the numerous valiant competitors for the post would be appointed in his stead.

After taking the head of an enemy it was considered necessary, at least in connection with the first few heads, to perform purificatory rites to ward off possible danger from the angry soul of the slain. With this object the slayer partook of a magico-religious "medicine." It

A MAMA HEADHUNTER

NOTE THE HEADBAND OF COWRIES AND CHARMS AND ORNAMENTS WORN ROUND THE NECK, ARMS, WAIST AND LEGS.

was made by grinding up into a powder a portion of the lips, nose, eyes, eyebrows, genital organs, liver and heart of the enemy, together with various herbs. The eating of this concoction was considered to destroy the power of the deceased to harm the eater. Any blood remaining on the sword of a warrior after killing an enemy had to be ceremonially licked off the weapon.

An additional result of these practices, it was also believed, was to impregnate the victor with some of the strength and bravery of the vanquished.

On the return of the warriors from battle, war-dances, followed by feasting and drinking, used to be held to celebrate the occasion. The war-chiefs and warriors (*i.e.* head-winners) performed the Esara dance with weapons in hand, whilst the women and "non-warrior" troops looked on. Masks were not worn by the dancers. The central figure was the war-chief, and the warriors danced round him.

A warrior's dress was distinguished by a certain kind of robe, which none but warriors might wear.

The skulls of slain enemies do not appear to have been used for drinking out of on these or any other occasions, contrary to the custom of the Okpotos south of the Benue. After the flesh had decomposed from off the skulls—it was not scraped off, but was put in a liquid until it dissolved off—they were placed on the town walls as a deterrent sign to future enemies.

Most prominent among the dances performed on the successful return of the troops was the one called Esara. This was formerly allowed to be executed only by head-winners to celebrate a victory, but it is now performed by men in general on the occasion of public

festivals, such as the harvest festival, and also by men round the corpse of a woman before interment.

As elsewhere stated, no dances are performed round the corpse of a man before interment.

The Esara drum is beaten also to aid the efforts of persons called out to do public work, such as, at present, road-repair work, but formerly chiefly town-wall repair and chief's-palace repair work. Even now, however, the permission of the official bearing the title of war-chief, Oseji, has to be obtained before the Esara drums are brought out.

There is at the present day one festival in the year in particular for the celebration of which it is essential to bring out the war-drums. This is held in the tenth month, at the shrine of a semi-mythical tribal royal ancestor, named Akangi, who would appear to be conceived of as a defender-of-towns or war-god.

Formerly, the principal purpose of the rites was to enlist the ghostly aid of Akangi to prosper his worshippers in military operations undertaken for the defence of towns. In the present days of peace the avowed object is to prevent human or ghostly enemies from entering the towns.

Shrines erected in honour of Akangi are situated immediately outside the main gate in the defensive walls of most Kwotto villages. The walls of the shrine are about one foot high, surmounted by a thatched roof, and form a circle of about four feet diameter. They are placed in the middle of the road leading into the village, the road being widened at this point and made to deviate round them on both sides.

One of the two paths thus formed is kept blocked

by branches of a thorny shrub, called Gaude, placed across it. On the last day of every month the road which has been kept open is closed, so that each month finds a different path blocked from its predecessor.

Inside the shrine is a pot containing a thunderbolt and charcoal obtained by burning the bark and leaves and roots of various trees and plants, including the Ohi, Oreba, Ozogi and Doka trees. The purpose of the thunderbolt, an item not uncommonly included among the fetish-objects of the different cults, is to augment the general efficacy of the cult objects and increase the speed with which answers from the spirits can be obtained. Thunderbolts in general, by virtue of their being supposed to have fallen direct from heaven, are believed to be animated by spiritual potency, derived from contact with the Sky-God himself. They are preserved carefully, and if the owner propitiates the spirit resident in the thunderbolt by appropriate sacrifice, in times of danger, it is believed, it will not fail to lend its powerful aid to its custodian.

The practice of erecting these shrines is said to have been inaugurated according to the directions of the before-mentioned blind tribal ancestor of the Kwottos named Akangi. Akangi, when he felt his end approaching, spoke as follows to his fellow-townsmen: "It has been revealed to me that I, a poor blind man, who have not been able, on account of my infirmity, to take much part in the defence of towns, may yet be of service to you after my death, if you will bury me outside the town and erect a shrine over my grave in such and such a manner [*i.e.* in the manner already described]. Then, if you will remember me by sacrifice when my aid

is required, my ghost will cause the enemy to become blind like me, and they will lose their way and go off in another direction."

The priesthood of the Akangi cult is in the hands of the ruling head of each village that possesses it.

Formerly the spirit of the Akangi fetish would be invoked with sacrifices on occasions of threatened attack. Now the rites performed in connection with it —excluding the monthly blocking of the alternate paths encircling it—are confined to the ceremony held as soon as convenient after the sighting of the tenth or harvest moon.

The Village Head and a selected elder repair to the sacred shrine towards evening, together with one young boy who must not have reached puberty. His duty it is to kill a sacrificial animal and pour out a libation of beer over the supposed grave inside the shrine. The sacrifice concluded, the three celebrants cook and eat the sacrificial animal, no one else being present. After they have finished this repast the signal is given for the men of the village gathered inside the outer walls to come out and take part in the remainder of the ceremony. This consists of discharging arrows into the shrine, so that its exterior will eventually present the appearance of the back of a porcupine, to the accompaniment of drinking and dancing and beating of war-drums carried on far into the night. Women do not take part in these rites.

Two alternative explanations of this mock-military ceremony suggest themselves.

On the one hand, as now performed, it may be a relic of something more real. In other words, it may repre-

sent the survival of a ceremonial execution of a young boy under the age of puberty as an expiatory offering on behalf of the community to the war-god, made with a view to inclining him to grant victory to the defenders of the town. In this connection it is noteworthy that one of the recognised Kwotto methods of executing a murderer in pre-Administration days was to shut the guilty man up in a hut, set fire to it and surround it with bowmen prepared to shoot him should he try to escape. In course of time a sacrificial animal might have become substituted for a human victim, as has been shown by Sir J. G. Frazer, in *The Golden Bough*,[4] frequently to have happened in other parts of the world.

On this view the original custom would have been practically identical with that known to have been practised in pre-Administration days by the headhunting Rukuba in a neighbouring province. The Rukuba used to sacrifice a victim to the ancestral spirits every seven years. A strong young man was forcibly caught and deposited in the sacred shrine. He was given two calabashes, one for drink and one for food. Every week a goat was brought to him, which he slaughtered and ate. If he died he was replaced by another young man, but if he lived he was ceremonially killed with arrows at the end of seven years.[5]

On the same view a further parallel is supplied by the practice of the neighbouring Yoruba, among whom, if a village contemplated war, human sacrifice had to be made to Ogun (the God of War) that the war might end successfully. The victim's head was severed on the stool of the god, the entrails were exposed before the image, and the body was suspended from a tree. The

corpse was treated with veneration: for, though only a slave, he would be born again as a king.[6]

On the other hand, it is possible to maintain, although perhaps with considerably less plausibility, that the mock-military elements of the Akangi ceremony merely symbolise the martial spirit of the defenders.

On this view it is not necessarily a survival of anything more real, but may be merely a ritual or legal expression of the character of the solemnities observed.

NOTES

[1] *Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, vol. ii., p. 49.
[2] *Op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 164.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 51.
[4] *The Golden Bough* (abridged edition), pp. 292, 392, 436.
[5] *Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, vol. ii., p. 39.
[6] *Op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 41 (quoting Johnson's *History of the Yorubas*).

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Trial by Fetish & Ordeal

IN pre-Administration days legal authority among the Kwottos was exercised by two classes of persons, both of which were regarded as having spiritual qualifications for the task.

The first were the political chiefs of the community. They were regarded as possessing certain supernatural attributes, and were invested on appointment with certain magico-religious objects useful to them in their judicial capacity. Secondly, there were the priestly custodians of certain powerful fetishes, who, by means of esoteric powers derived from contact with the spirits of their fetishes, were believed to possess the power of detecting and slaying criminals.

Persons were usually brought before these public judicial authorities, in cases of breaches of contract or tort, only where the parties or arbitrators could not agree to settle the matter by composition out of court, and in criminal cases only in the case of the more serious crimes, such as murder. Most of the lesser crimes were allowed to be composed by the parties affected if they so desired.

The authority and supposed faculty of right judgment possessed by the political chiefs rests on the belief that each paramount chief rules by divine right, and that the divine spirit associated with him descends upon, and thereafter " possesses," his subordinate chiefs also at the

religious ceremony of their installation. The nature of the influence possessed by the custodians of the tribal fetishes in the Kwotto pre-Administration legal system is discussed in the present chapter.

There are many persons still alive who remember, and even played a prominent part in, the former system of terrorisation of criminals and supposed wielders of wizardly power through the agency of these fetishes; and it may be of interest to record an account of what used to happen a few years ago as given to me by persons who stated they had a first-hand knowledge of what they narrated.

There were formerly among the Kwottos many local fetish-objects associated with spirits possessing witch- and criminal-killing powers. These were housed in temples, which still stand. They are circular, mud-brick edifices with thatched roofs, similar in construction to the houses of the people.

The custodianship of and the power to invoke such fetishes were in the hands of certain families, whose ancestors had either had the secrets of the magico-religious rites revealed to them during their intercourse with spirits or had purchased the secrets, and with them the supernatural power, from other families who possessed them. One such dangerous fetish, named the Agabi fetish, owned by the Village Head of Agwonka, was actually found to be terrorising the natives in the Umaisha District as late as 1917, when the officiating shaman was sentenced to imprisonment, on various counts, by a Commissioner of the Provincial Court.

When on tour in Toto District in 1926 I compiled a list of some dozen formerly powerful fetishes then

functioning in a more or less harmless manner in different villages. Private oaths are still sometimes sworn on these objects, but the spirits of the fetishes do not, as formerly, openly undertake to slay those who forswear themselves.

The nature and composition of the fetish-objects kept in the different temples vary to some extent from place to place, according to the particular department with which the presiding god is associated. Among such sacred emblems are thunderbolts, axes, knives, arrows, feathers, skulls, horns, stones, calabashes containing earth or water, and so on. All of these are associated with one or other of the deities of the Pantheon.

A principal fetish in most temples, with which contact is made when taking an oath, consists of a gourd containing charcoal obtained by burning the bark, leaves or roots of various trees and plants, together with some magical "medicine," and often hung on the outside with Azonki berries. These symbols are probably associated with an earth or fertility deity, or deities.

In former times, when a man desired to invoke one of the tribal fetishes, he had first to present the custodian priest with a suitable offering. Then, after making the appropriate incantations and sacrifice to the spirit of the fetish, the pleader drew the attention of the spirit by some physical sign, usually by tapping on the ground with a stick, to the subject of his plea.

If it were to prove his innocence of some alleged crime the pleader made contact with the fetish, either by touching the outside of the gourd containing it or by swallowing some of its contents, at the same time

declaiming: "If I lie, may this fetish kill me." It was believed that, if he were guilty, he would be killed by the supernatural agency of the fetish-spirit on thus forswearing himself.

If it were to detect or slay a known or unknown criminal, the pleader—after making contact with the fetish—prayed that its spirit would contrive to kill the wrongdoer. In some temples—for example, in the temple of the Adoma fetish, in Atako village—by way of assisting the spirit in his destructive work, the suppliant would light a fire close to the fetish every evening for fourteen days. On each occasion he would accompany the action with the words: "As this fuel is being destroyed, so let him be destroyed who has sinned against us." Then, if a person suspected of the crime complained of were later to meet with a violent death, the diviners, on being consulted, would give out that the spirit of the fetish had justly killed him on account of his misdeeds, and therefore his whole property had to be confiscated and taken to the fetish-house.

The reason given for the confiscation of the property was that it was for the good of the public. The whole of the deceased's possessions by contact with the spirit of the fetish had become charged, as it were, with its strong spiritual potency. They were, therefore, dangerous for anyone to touch but the fetish-priest or his attendants, who had the medicine to counteract this danger.

In practice, it will be seen, the belief put great temptation in the way of unscrupulous fetish-priests to trump up charges and commit surreptitious murders for the sake of enriching themselves.

These powerful, killing fetishes might be invoked also to protect from potential criminals, especially wizards, as well as to slay actual wrongdoers. For example, as nearly all kinds of illness were attributed to witchcraft, a man would bring an object, say a string of Azonki berries, to the fetish-priest to be consecrated by appropriate rites and sacrifices performed in the presence of the fetish. On the conclusion of the ceremony this would be carried back to the house or worn on the person of the pleader as a strong protection against the assaults of ghostly enemies.

The death of a man other than by reason of old age was formerly generally, and is nowadays frequently, attributed by the Kwottos to supernatural agency, the most general form for it to take being witchcraft. When a death was thought to have been caused by witchcraft it was considered necessary to prove whether this was so by identifying the wizard or witch responsible, who might be dead or alive. The next step after identification was utterly to destroy, or at least move out of harm's way into the fetish sanctuary, both the wizard (or witch), if alive, or his remains, if dead, and all material objects associated with him.

The second alternative—viz. of confiscation by the fetish-priest—was commonly adopted in connection with the more valuable effects of the culprit. The principle of getting rid of the physical body of the latter was also sometimes extended to certain relatives, who were either killed or sold into slavery.

Where a dead witch, the location of whose grave was unknown, was regarded as the source of the trouble the grave had first to be found. I was given the following

description of the procedure which had been adopted in a search for such a grave by the fetish-priest of the Agana cult.

A party of cult officials, headed by the chief fetish-priest clad in his ceremonial cloak and bearing the sacred-cult axe and a bunch of leaves of the Kenkeroje tree, set off to look for the grave. The junior attendants were employed in digging holes, on the instructions of the priest, for the latter to descend into in search of the witch's bones. Once these had been located his attendants were not permitted to take any part in the subsequent proceedings. They had to wait at a distance while the priest, protected by certain "medicine" which he rubbed three times over his eyes, entered the hole and, with the sacred Agana axe in his right hand, hacked the alleged cause of the trouble to pieces, to the accompaniment of shrill, childlike screams. The latter —though, in fact, no doubt, made by the priest—were interpreted by the acolytes as the death-cries of the witch. Having accomplished his task the fetish-priest returned to the Agana sanctuary with the remains in a bag, which were then added to the gruesome relics already stored there.

As regards witchcraft among relatives, there is a Kwotto saying that when a man or woman has died from being bewitched he has been killed by the wizardly power of either his mother's brother or father's sister. This may show that these persons are considered the most likely to desire the death of their junior relations. It represents a particular application of the general belief that, as a rule, witchcraft may be exercised by senior relatives over junior ones, but not vice versa.

In this connection it is interesting to note that the Kwottos, when interceding with the departed at the family shrine, address only the ghosts of senior relatives. The younger ones are apparently considered deficient in supernatural power, owing to their not having lived long enough to acquire it. From such an assumption it seems the belief might arise in the youngest relatives being both less capable of exercising and of resisting evil power, a fact obvious enough when the argument is advanced on the physiological plane.

It thus comes about that a mother or father is credited with the power of killing their children by wizardry, if evilly disposed towards them. In the same way an elder brother or sister may kill their younger brother or sister, or a grandfather his grandchildren, but the reverse is not probable. It is believed that an elder brother would not dream of causing the death of a younger brother or sister while the latter had children alive, as wizardly power always seeks to vent itself on the youngest relatives available. On the same principle it is considered that a grandfather would devour—spiritually, it must be understood—all his grandchildren, even if they numbered a hundred, before starting to kill his own or his brother's or sister's children.

Formerly, if a man or woman died, who was believed to have been killed by witchcraft, the body was not buried, but was dragged naked by a rope, attached to the waist, from the scene of death to the sanctuary of Agana. There it was hacked to pieces by the priests, parts of the body being scattered north, south, east and west, and the bones and skull being deposited or buried in the precincts. All the possessions of the deceased

were confiscated, for they were regarded as charged with influence derived from the evil qualities of the dead man of potential harm to the community. It will thus be seen that both the wizard or witch and his victim were treated in the same manner — a logical enough procedure when one considers that both were believed to have become tarred with the same dangerous supernatural brush.

The following account is current among the Kwottos concerning the origin of the Agana witch-cult rites.

Many years ago there lived an old man who had a sick son. One day he was out walking when he met a strange creature clad in a grass-cloak, which entirely concealed his head. He was carrying an axe in his right hand and a bunch of Kenkeroje leaves in his left. The old man asked the stranger what manner of man he was, and the stranger replied to the following effect: "My name is Agana. I am the enemy of wizards and the helper of man. I live on beer, which is my food and drink. If I come across any evil or sickness caused by witchcraft I can frighten the wizard out of his residence with my peculiar shout, and, if I catch him, I can slay him with this axe of mine." The old man then besought Agana's help on behalf of his son. Agana replied that if the sickness was of Hinegba (the Sky-God) he could do nothing, but if the sickness was caused by wizardry he could drive it away, provided he was first supplied with sustenance, in the form of beer. The old man took Agana to his house and regaled him with beer. Agana took the beer in the peculiar manner in which the priest of the Agana cult takes it at the present day, ceremonially, by passing the calabash first under his left leg with

his right hand and then grasping it with his left hand from under his left leg, before finally lifting the calabash to his mouth to drink. In the evening Agana entered the hut of the boy and stood on guard. Presently he saw the naked figure of the witch approaching the boy, but the witch, on catching sight of Agana armed with his axe, took fright and fled. Agana pursued and killed him. The boy recovered. Soon afterwards Agana died in the vicinity, and the old man came across his body clad in his cloak and with his strange paraphernalia by his side. He and his fellow-villagers carried the body into the forest and there started digging a grave.

Their labours were interrupted by the sound of someone approaching. Quick as thought one of the men put on Agana's cloak and snatched up his axe and ran yelling in the direction of the noise, which had been made by women approaching, seeking firewood. The women shrieked with fear and fled in terror, reporting that they had met a monster in the forest. And that is the Kwottos' explanation of the *raison d'être* for the Agana cult and of why women are not allowed to attend the rites—namely, for the reason that they thus on this occasion showed themselves lacking in the necessary courage to do so.

An alternative explanation given to me by native informants as to why women are not allowed to take part in the men's cult-rites has reference to the prevalent superstition, which the Kwottos share with the Jukuns, that a menstruating woman entering a holy place would defile it.

Somewhat similar in kind to the superstitious dread of blood by the Kwottos is their dread of the tribal

fetishes. On these, as a consequence, oaths were formerly sworn, both in judicial public proceedings held before political chiefs and in private proceedings, where a man desired to demonstrate his innocence on a charge lodged against him by his neighbour. Oaths were formerly sworn on all sorts of fetish-objects, including the household-god fetish (Osekpa), it being believed that a man who forswore himself would be killed by the spirit invoked.

A man's statement on oath made before a judicial officer was customarily accepted as necessarily true, by virtue of the circumstances under which it was made to such officer. It was considered to be the function of the fetish-spirit invoked, and not that of human authority, to punish the perjurer if his statement were false.

It follows that, in order to enable a Kwotto judge to arrive at a decision in such cases, it was practicable to give only one of the parties the oath. The person selected was usually the defendant or accused.

Often, however, the president of the court preferred to shelve all personal responsibility for arriving at a decision, and, after administering an oath to one or both parties, would leave the question of who was in the right in the lap of the gods. In these circumstances, the question of guilt remaining undecided by human authority would be left to be demonstrated by the fetish-spirit appealed to by means of some future supernatural manifestation.

The procedure in such cases is referred to below when dealing with trial by ordeal. It will be seen that the belief that nemesis would surely overtake a guilty

man, when confirmed by observation that suspected criminals often did in practice die violent deaths—engineered, no doubt, on occasion by the fetish-priest concerned—would in practice act as a powerful deterrent to would-be criminals.

Nowadays oaths are usually sworn either by touching a knife, arrow or axe-head, also sometimes a thunderbolt, or by drinking water in which one of these objects has been placed. It is believed that the spirit associated with these objects will surely cause the guilty man to die, either immediately or when he next makes contact with these weapons.

The common belief in and dread of a spirit connected with metal is here well illustrated. A further instance is to be found in the intense fear manifested by the Kwottos of members of the Ganagana tribe, who, as a class, monopolise the smithying industry in the Toto District.

It has already been mentioned that trial by ordeal used to be commonly employed by the Kwottos to decide difficult criminal causes. It seems invariably to have been used in dealing with accusations of witchcraft.

The commonest form of ordeal oath in such cases was sworn by the spirit of the Gwaska tree. A gwaska draught was administered to the accused. This would be swallowed by—and thus kill—a guilty man, but an innocent man would vomit it up, and thus remain unharmed.

Another common form of trial was by the spirit of a fetish consisting of a fruit of the Giginya tree attached to a piece of rope and buried about three feet under

the ground. This was usually undergone by both accused and accuser together, to see which was right. The free end of the rope was tied round the wrist of the person being tried. Innocence would be demonstrated by pulling the giginya fruit out of the ground without the rope tightening round the wrist of the puller; while, conversely, guilt would be shown by it tightening.

A third type of ordeal oath was sworn by the spirit of a thunderbolt. Water from a receptacle containing a thunderbolt was drunk by both parties, and it was believed that the guilty one would eventually be killed by the falling of one of these objects.

In yet another form recourse was had to the spirit of the Benue river. It was believed that a perjurer who drank the water administered in this ordeal would be drowned if, on any future occasion, he ventured to make contact with the Benu river, as by bathing or canoeing.

As to punishments, where these were imposed by judicial officers and not, as in trial by ordeal, left in the hands of supernatural agency, they are stated to have been as follows.

A murderer was usually punished by death, it being considered dishonourable to accept a composition of this crime, if committed by a man. At Panda the guilty person was usually executed by being bound hand and foot and thrown into the river. Other forms of execution were by hanging, the criminal being made to jump down from a tree with a rope round his neck, and by burning, the sentenced man being shut up in a burning hut, surrounded by bowmen prepared to shoot him should he try to escape.

No punishment was imposed for accidental homicide,

although compensation to the relatives was usually awarded.

The killing of a man in self-defence, or of a man caught by a husband committing adultery with his wife, or of a man caught in the act of burglary, was justified.

Murderesses often escaped lightly. They were sometimes merely sent to their father for punishment, occasionally awarded some punishment short of death, and very rarely were executed.

Stealing by day was usually punished by selling the thief into slavery, although the imposition of a fine, in addition to the making of restitution, was an alternative punishment.

A burglar caught at night might be summarily killed (justifiable homicide), but if he escaped immediate capture he would be dealt with in much the same way as a thief by day.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Birth Ceremonies

AMONG the Kwottos, birth is believed to be caused by the entry of an ancestral spirit (*ekiti*), usually that of a deceased grandfather, into the womb. This belief exists concurrently with the knowledge that sexual relations are necessary to conception, and that the period of gestation is usually about nine months. There seems to be some difference of opinion as to the exact time when the ancestral spirit becomes the child, but it would appear that it is thought to enter the fœtus at the time of quickening. This event, at any rate, is definitely attributed to the activity of a spirit.

It may at first blush appear odd that natives should persist in the belief that conception is not due solely to the physical union of the sexes, but that the *vera causa* is the entrance of an ancestral spirit into the womb. Yet, if one puts oneself in the position of the native, such a belief can hardly be regarded as illogical. He believes that pain in the human body is, in general, caused by the intrusion of a foreign spirit, which " possesses " the patient. What could be more natural, therefore, than to attribute quickening pains, not to the effect of prior sexual relations, but to the movement of an ancestral spirit in the womb? Further, the native will argue, is it not known that a woman may frequently be apprised in dreams of the intention of a given spirit

to be born of her, and does not the appearance and conduct in life of the child often afford striking proof of the reality of such incarnation?

Wherever a woman happens to be when she first becomes aware of her conception she regards that place thereafter with peculiar awe. If, for example, she was passing under a tree at such a time, she may consider that the ancestral spirit to be incarnated of her was specially lurking in the branches of the tree, ready to jump down on her when she approached it. Expeditions even may be made by women to sacred ghost-occupied places with a view to persuading a ghost thus to enable them to obtain children.

When a woman first begins to feel the movement of her child she shaves her head completely and puts on old, dirty and ragged cloths, and maintains herself in this condition until its birth. Her husband similarly avoids the putting on of fine raiment from the date of the quickening until the day on which his wife gives birth, and also refrains from shaving during the same period.

This procedure on the part of a woman is the same as that observed by a widow on the death of her husband. Comparable observances by widows, occurring among other Northern Nigerian tribes, have been explained by Mr Meek as intended partly to "disguise the mourners from the onslaught of evil spirits." [1]

It would appear consistent with this line of reasoning to explain the parallel observances practised by a pregnant woman and her husband as having similarly originated as magico-religious rites to ward off attacks of ghostly enemies. Such enemies might be supposed,

in particular, to include "wanderer spirits" (*e.g.* of stillborn children), who, out of jealousy for the spirit which has been lucky enough to find a means of being born again, might seek to do the unborn child or the expectant mother harm.

A further example which might be adduced to demonstrate the possible connection of such practices with the desire of concealment from evil spirits by means of disguise is found in the Kwotto custom whereby if a woman bears a first child, and it dies, she will shave the whole of her head and stain her body with camwood dye (*majigi*) as a magico-religious rite to avoid a recurrence of such a calamity.

A somewhat similar practice obtains among the Hausas and Jukuns, but not at the present day among the Kwottos, of shaving half the head of later-born children to protect them from a like fate to that of their predeceased relative. Mr Meek interprets this practice also as intended to disguise the children from the onslaught of evil spirits.[2]

A similar notion as to the wisdom of hiding from ghostly enemies during pregnancy might also account for the Kwotto prohibition against a pregnant woman leaving her compound. Were she to do so, it is believed, the unborn child would die.

A further restriction imposed on her is that she is not allowed during pregnancy to sit on her stool (*kujera*)—a low four-legged structure—which she habitually uses at other times. Perhaps originally her presence on it was considered to aid evil spirits in their identification of her.

Lastly, there are two wedding customs which seem

to belong to the same general category as the wearing of old and ragged clothes and the shaving of the head by pregnant women and widows: these are the dressing up of the bride in old garments on the day she leaves her parents' for her husband's house, and the shaving completely of the head of the bridegroom on the wedding day. These customs also might, by analogy with the others, be regarded as in origin attempts at disguise intended to ward off spiritual dangers conceived of as present in all the critical periods of life.

In all these instances, however, it is important to remember that the above-suggested origins of these practices are no more than a tentative reconstruction of entirely hypothetical history—at any rate so far as the Kwottos are concerned. As such they are liable to the same sort of criticism as the "historical"—as distinct from the "functional"—interpretation of magical phenomena referred to when discussing the relation of magic to science.

If, on the other hand, one applies the methods of the "functional" rather than the "historical" school of anthropological investigation, it would seem that one can deduce alternative explanations of the phenomena at least equally as deserving of consideration as the conventional "historical" explanations.

One may suppose, for example, that these pregnancy, mourning and marriage "disguise" customs, far from having their roots in serious logical thought, and being regarded by their practitioners as having a serious scientific purpose, may have developed as the result of a spontaneous expression, or dramatisation, of certain sentiments, the procedure being subsequently

conventionalised. For dramatic acts are naturally performed by natives at times of emotional crises or anxiety, fulfilling the double function of imparting an emotional satisfaction to the individual and furnishing an outward sign to others which enables them to adjust their conduct accordingly. For example, a man is warned by the displaying of the outward signs of mourning by a widow that Kwotto custom forbids him to approach her during the period, while she on her part derives a melancholy emotional satisfaction by thus illustrating by an outward and visible sign her grief and devotion to her husband.

Such practices have, in addition, a further sociological function of no mean value in a savage society, which by reason of the prevailing state of ignorance is peculiarly liable to be disrupted by the individual vanities and passions of its emotionally volatile members. For they serve to give social recognition to the conventional orientation of sentiments within the Kwotto family, on the continuance of which the stability of the society in general, and the institution of marriage in particular, depend.

The actual native explanations of certain of the above group of customs seem to support the latter "functional" rather than the first-mentioned "historical" interpretation of them.

For example, I was given the following account of the reason for the restrictions imposed on a pregnant woman. The shaving of the head at the time of quickening constitutes an indication by the woman that she has humbled herself, surrendered herself into the hands of the gods and thrown herself on their mercy. A similar

explanation is given to account for the analogous practice of the father. Were the husband to show such lack of sympathy with his wife as to put on fine clothes before her period of travail is over it is said that the wrath of the spirits would certainly be visited upon him. It is further explained that one of the objects of the woman shaving her head and wearing old and ragged cloths is to render her appearance unattractive to the males of the community. She will thus not be tempted to indulge in illicit relations during this critical period.

The native explanation of the custom of the bride refraining from washing and putting on old cloths the day she leaves her parents' for her husband's house is as follows. Were she to do otherwise it would be said: "She has no modesty. She is in an undue hurry to dress up."

It will thus be seen that these practices are apparently viewed by those who perform them as in the nature of rites intended as a socio-religious expression of the conformity of the individual to the tribal ethical code. The rites symbolise and tend to perpetuate the conventional attitudes of mind or orientations of sentiment which the society expects and demands of its members in given circumstances.

In the light of this evidence the group of customs referred to above would seem to teach us more about the present moral and religious ideas of the society in which they are found than about their pseudo-scientific attempts to hide from or cheat evil spirits in a dim and hypothetical past.

On this view it seems reasonable to interpret these practices, as a whole, as originating as ceremonial

gestures intended to indicate an attitude of religious humility, conceived of as acceptable to the gods and, consequently, likely to incline the latter to help the living in times of crisis or anxiety. In everyday life the native calculates that, if he performs humble gestures before a powerful person, and propitiates him with presents, the latter is more likely to attend to his representations; and he applies the same principles in adjusting his relations with the ghosts of his ancestors and other spiritual beings after death.

Viewed as ceremonial gestures of humility, the above customs seem to have much the same social value for the simple savage as the various Christianised forms of dramatised religious humility do for those who observe them in Europe. I refer to the performance of such humiliatory penances, among others, as the going into cloistered retirement, the shaving of the head, the putting off of fine raiment, the clothing of the body in sackcloth and ashes — and various other forms of self-punishment — resorted to by the devout-minded in response to a sentimental urge at times of intense emotional crisis or anxiety.

Once the possibility of a psychological correlation between the European and African phenomena is accepted, the conventional "historical" explanations of the latter practices seem as absurd as to suggest that when a European peasant kneels down, prostrates himself, covers his face with his hands, retires into seclusion or avoids the use of fine raiment in the course of religious ceremonial, performed at times of emotional crisis, he is performing acts which probably originated as pseudo-scientific attempts to hide from or cheat evil spirits.

As regards the actual birth, the Kwotto mother delivers her child in the sitting position on a flat stone or mud-brick wall (*kongo*), the legs being held apart and the shoulders supported by female friends or old women acting as midwives.

The husband is not present at the birth. This may be a relic of a previous practice of matrilocal birth, or an instance of the application of the principle of sex segregation which plays such an important part in African society.

The navel cord is severed by means of a razor. It is placed with the placenta in a pot, which is then —according to the custom prevailing in Toto town— given to an old woman, or the mother of the husband, to take and throw into the river, so that it may be carried out of harm's way by the current. The carrier of the pot is under an obligation not to look behind her or to the right or left. Should she do so, it is believed that an eye of the child will thereby be caused to squint in the direction in which the old woman turns.

In places where there is no river close at hand the umbilical cord and placenta are put into a pot or calabash and carefully buried at the back of the house in such a manner that the earth does not come into contact with it. If it did so, it is believed that the eyes of the child would be defective. The flat stone on which the mother gave birth is placed on top of the burial-place of the placenta, and for three months after birth the water used in washing the child is, after use, always thrown away on top of the stone. The throwing of water over the burial-place of the placenta, when the latter is not thrown into the river, would appear to be a valid

substitute in magico-religious practice for actually throwing the placenta into the water, as described in the previous paragraph.

The portion of the umbilical cord which remains attached to the child for a few days is continually rubbed with oil until it drops off, and is then placed beside the after-birth.

The latter, it would seem, is regarded as containing part of the surplusage of the "paternal soul" or over-soul (*ekiti*) of the child, and it may be for this reason that it is thrown into water, or alternatively that water is thrown over it. The procedure, that is to say, may be a magical means of aiding the "paternal soul" to return to an association with water (in the form of rain) in the sky, whence, as will be explained later, it is believed to have come.

The day after birth charms are placed round the waist, arms or neck of the infant to guard against the manifold dangers believed to surround the child at this period from those who are jealous of it and might wish to compass its death by poison. One charm against poison consists of the leaves of the Ube, Dandana and Gogoro trees, duly consecrated in the course of a magico-religious ceremony, placed inside a piece of antelope horn, the whole being sewn up inside a leather container. Failure to provide the child with this charm is believed to subject it to the grave danger of being poisoned by the first water it drinks.

As the child grows up it will gradually acquire further charms, designed to protect it from the dangers attendant on adolescence.

The question as to whether a woman will give birth

in her husband's or her parents' house is decided by reference to diviners. If the latter alternative is decided upon, the woman goes secretly to her mother's house.

Such secrecy on comparable occasions among other tribes has been held to suggest the possibility of the intention originally having been to delude evil spirits as to her location. This seems rather far-fetched. An adequate explanation would seem to be afforded by the fact that from the quickening period onwards the expectant mother is in a condition of taboo, on account of which she is required to observe as far as possible a state of ceremonial seclusion.

The majority of births nowadays take place in the husband's house, but if the parents' house is selected, and the birth takes place in a satisfactory manner, the special suitability of the environment to the function of giving birth is often regarded as thus demonstrated. The woman may then remain normally resident in her parents' household until she has given birth to several further children. In no circumstances, however, will the children remain in the mother's house after the period of weaning is over, for the responsibility for their moral education lies, not in the hands of the parents, but in those of the child's paternal uncles and aunts.

Before a child is born sacrifices of fowls and beer are made to the ancestral ghosts, in order that they may lend their aid. After birth further thanksgiving sacrifices are made to them, and also to the spirit of any magico-religious "medicine" which may have been taken to obtain childbirth or easy delivery, as also, of course, to the shaman who supplied it.

For fourteen days after the birth the mother stays indoors. During this period she is regarded as in a state of taboo, and the husband will not eat food cooked by her. Were he to do so it is believed his eyes would suffer.

It is interesting to note in this connection that most Kwottos will refuse also to eat food cooked by a menstruating woman, and for the same reason.

A further prohibition which applies during the periods in which a woman is regarded as in a state of taboo is that against sexual relations. These are allowed during pregnancy, but strictly forbidden after the birth, and until the period of weaning is completed, on the ground that the mother's milk would thereby be spoiled and the child become diseased.

NOTES

[1] *Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, vol. ii., p. 131.
[2] *Ibid.*

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Child-Naming

ON the fourteenth day after the birth the mother appears in public with the infant, and is the recipient of presents from her friends and relatives at the naming ceremony, which then takes place.

Like the "bride-washing" and resurrection ceremonies, to be described later, the proceedings are characterised by much feasting, drinking and noise.

The head of the child is carefully shaved on the naming day before the ceremony.

The custom of also scarifying the face or body of the child at this juncture, which obtains among some other tribes, is not carried out. The Kwottos at the present day have no particular tribal marks, but the youth of both sexes, especially the girls, often scarify their face and other parts before marriage, with the avowed object of rendering themselves attractive to the opposite sex.

Besides the face, girls frequently submit to the scarification of the back, the chest just above the breasts and the abdomen. As the dress of an unmarried girl does not permit the covering of the upper part of the body, it will be seen that there is plenty of opportunity for the display of this type of adornment.

The "birth-names" given to children on the naming day are chosen by the divinatory method, the seer

deciding whether the child is an incarnation of a deceased ancestor or not. If the child is held to be an incarnation of its grandfather it is given its grandfather's name and treated with great respect by its father, who would not dare to address it familiarly by its birth-name, as he would other children, for fear of offending his ancestor.

The vagueness and fluidity of the Kwotto notions concerning personality are reflected also in their reincarnation ideas. For, in practice, the belief that an ancestor has been reincarnated in a descendant does not prevent the continuance of supplications addressed to the same ancestor at his grave or elsewhere. In fact, the first ceremony to be performed after the diviners have decided on the identity of the soul of the child is to repair to the grave of the ancestor in question and offer up thanks and sacrifice.

Generally speaking, it is not considered possible for a new-born child to be animated by the personality of a living being, and thus a child is never named after its father or mother. It may, however, very occasionally be named after a living grandparent, for the animation of a child by the personality of a very old or very powerful person is considered possible. For instance, the chief of a village, named Chiji, who died a few years ago, was credited with being more than a hundred years old; and the fact that his strength was waning was considered in a measure correlated to the increasing strength of a grandchild in whom the old man's personality resided. The weak old man was said to be very jealous of the boy who possessed his soul, and to believe that if by any mischance he was to come into physical contact

PROFESSIONAL HOE-DANCERS

A DANCE EXECUTED WITH HOES BY PROFESSIONAL PERFORMERS AT AN AGRICULTURAL FESTIVAL.

with the youth the rest of his personality would be drawn out of him by the latter and he would quickly die. The paramount chief of the Kwottos, the King of Panda, who was regarded in former times as an incarnation of the Deity, was believed to have the power of animating a number of grandchildren with his personality during his lifetime. It is easy to understand how in this instance miracles would be as easily attributed to a divine king as to God.

It is considered a creditable performance for a deceased ancestor to animate descendants, much in the same way as a living person is proud of becoming a father or mother. Ancestral spirits who were powerful when on earth are held capable of disappointment and righteous anger if they are denied the opportunity of animating their descendants. Thus one can hardly doubt that circumstances may arise in which the desire that the spirit of one out of several possible ancestors should be found to animate a child may be taken into consideration by the diviner. For example, a disappointed great-grandfather might be accepted in preference to a grandfather. It appears that a male child may be determined to be an incarnation of a grandmother, although more usually that of a grandfather, but he is not on that account given a woman's name.

Twins are given special names.

The birth of such is regarded as a most unfortunate occurrence. This is doubtless because it is an abnormal event, and the abnormal is to the primitive mind ominous. The occasion is one charged with peril to the whole community, and especially to the parents.

If both twins survive infancy and attain puberty it

is considered certain that one of their parents will die. Consequently it used to be customary to poison one of them, and it is said that this custom is still secretly carried out in some parts.

Yet even after the death of one of the twins the danger to the parents is not entirely removed. An image of the deceased twin has to be made, clothed with appropriate infants' clothes, and treated in all respects as though it were alive. Thus the surviving twin may not be taken to its mother's breast without the image being laid in like manner to the other breast. The image is given a name and regarded as the elder brother of the deceased. Thus if the name of the surviving twin is Aba, the image will be called Abako. These observances have to be carried out until the survivor has been completely weaned, when the danger, which up to that time is a mortal one for the mother, is considered to be over. The image is then carefully stowed away in the house, as the life of the survivor is regarded as bound up with it.

The surviving twin is regarded as possessed of supernatural power, owing to the supposed supernatural mode of its birth. If both survive, the one born first is regarded as the junior, for it is observed that that one from the very moment of its birth showed its inferior personality by agreeing to go in front of his more lordly brother out of the womb into the world, in order to prepare the way for the latter.

As with twins, peculiar observances are associated also with the naming and treatment of first-born children and of children born after the death of several of their parents' previous children.

Parents regard their first child with very special awe. This would appear quite natural, since a first experience, owing to its novelty, is often associated with a heightened emotional impression.

The method of naming the first child does not differ from that adopted for subsequent children; but once the first-born has been given a birth-name, its parents will not dream of addressing it by such, as they do their other children. The Hausas carry this principle further, and, it is said, will often refuse to give the first-born a name at all.

The Kwottos habitually address their first-born impersonally or by some nickname. The taboo on speaking his or her birth-name is absolute. Consequently other persons bearing the same name, whom the speaker would normally be entitled to call by their birth-name, have to be referred to by some roundabout method. In the same way the tabooed word, should it represent, for example, the name of a day or month or some common object, has to be avoided in conversation by resort to some periphrasis.

The first child usually receives unenviable treatment from its parents. Their conventional attitude in public is that they do not love it, and that, being a first child, it is bound to be the fool and simpleton of the family. For identical offences the parents will punish it more severely than they would other children.

Such an attitude of disparagement, as might be expected, leads to a reciprocation of the sentiment on the part of the junior. An eldest child is permitted, by the convention which allows the manifestation of mutual disrespect between the parties, to call its mother by

her "marriage-name" (*i.e.* the name given to her by her husband on marriage), or even by her birth-name, and a similar attitude is adopted towards the father.

This conduct is tolerated only by the real parents. An eldest child must address the co-wives of his father and the wives of his father's brothers (all of whom live in the same household) by a term of respect meaning "my mother," and the husbands of the latter as "my father."

In practice a first child is nearly always handed over by the father to a younger brother (or an elder brother if there is no younger brother) to be brought up, if a boy, or to the father's sister if a girl; and every matter involving parental authority, such as the arrangement of marriage or the responsibility for debts, is henceforward referred to the adopted father.

The custom of a father handing over his children to his brother or sister to look after is, however, by no means confined to the first child, although the conventional attitude of mutual disrespect between real parents and offspring is so confined.

Probably in some respects correlated psychologically with the convention of pretending to be ashamed of the first-born is the Kwotto practice of naming children born after the death of their parents' previous children by a contemptuous name.

Such a custom occurring among other Northern Nigerian tribes has been explained by Mr Meek as based on the supposition that the evil spirits who killed the previous children will not trouble to take away a child who is thus seemingly held in such small regard by its parents; and an explanation on the same lines has

been given to account for the contemptuous attitude adopted towards the first-born, who, like the former class of children, is regarded from birth as surrounded by special dangers.[1]

On the other hand, in regard to a similar custom occurring among the Fulani, the same authority states: "This may be a relic of a former custom (as among some Semitic peoples) of killing the first-born, or it may reflect the natural jealousy which a man entertains towards his first child." [2]

In all these instances, however, as was pointed out in connection with certain birth, mourning and marriage "disguise" customs, it is important to remember that the above-suggested origins of these customs are no more than a tentative reconstruction of entirely hypothetical history—at any rate so far as the Kwottos are concerned. They are not adduced as the reason for the practices by the natives themselves, who account for them merely as "customary" things to do.

If, on the other hand, one applies the methods of the "functional" rather than the "historical" school of anthropological investigation to the customs in question, it would seem that in these instances, also, one can deduce alternative explanations of the phenomena at least as equally deserving of consideration as the conventional "historical" ones.

One may suppose, for example, that these contemptuous forms of address, far from having their roots in serious logical thought as pseudo-scientific attempts to deceive evil spirits, may have developed as the result of a spontaneous expression or dramatisation of pious humility (subsequently conventionalised), performed

with the object of placating the assumed wrathful spirits who had caused the death of the earlier children.

Such a demonstration on the part of the parents would be only an extension to their dealings with spirits of the common native convention whereby a subordinate adopts a pose of exaggerated humility in the presence of a superior when he is seeking anything.

I have personally, on occasion, been credited with most of the attributes of the Almighty by sycophantic native flatterers who have been seeking some petty favour or other, and heard them liken themselves to slaves, dunghills or eaters of dung, instead of contenting themselves, in less dramatic phrase, with being merely my humble and obedient servants. The point is that it is precisely such contemptuous names as "slave," "dunghill" and "eater of dung" which are applied by parents to children born after the death of several previous ones, when they are seeking the aid of the spirits to prosper them.

In the light of this evidence the distribution of exaggeratedly humble naming conventions, such as those under reference, would seem to teach us more about the devotional trend of thought or pious religiosity of the society which originally imposed them than about their pseudo-scientific attempts to cheat evil spirits in a dim and hypothetical past.

If one accepts this interpretation of the phenomena, the above customs appear to have much the same social value for the African savage as the imposition of piously conceived appellations has for parents who so name their children in other parts of the world. One may compare, for instance, the seventeenth-century Christian

name "Praise God" and the common Mohammedan religious name "Abdallah" or "Abdulla" (*i.e.* "slave of Allah").

The conventional "historical" explanations of the African practices, then, seem as absurd as it would be to suggest that when a pious Christian or Mohammedan parent gives his offspring a deferential or servile religious name such as these, and in his supplications for its welfare describes it and himself in humble Litanical language as contemptible and unworthy, he does so in order that the Spiritual Powers may be cheated into thinking that the parents do really—as distinct from ceremonially—hold themselves and their children in disregard.

NOTES

[1] *Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, vol. ii., p. 81.
[2] *Op. cit.*, vol. i., p. 235.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Education & Courtship

TURNING to the next stage in the life of the infants—namely, their education and moral instruction—one finds that, as among the Keffi Yegomawa Fulani, this is not entrusted to the actual parents. Boys are brought up by their paternal uncle, and girls by their paternal aunt. These relatives also arrange the marriage of their wards.

The relatives of the mother do not normally interfere with the education of her children, but the authority of the mother's brother as the head of the kindred is invoked as a last resort by the paternal relatives, should their authority over a given child prove of no avail. So ungrateful and shameful is it considered to resist the wishes of the relatives of the mother that it is said that the threat of resorting to them has only very rarely to be carried out.

Children are taught to show the profoundest respect to the senior male members of their mother's kindred, for various reasons, one of which is the spiritual position they occupy in it. They are the interceders on behalf of their sister with the ancestral spirits of the kindred; and on her death it is the head of her kindred and not her children—who belong to the totem clan of their father—who must arrange for her funeral ceremonies, on the due performance of which the happiness of her life in the afterworld depends.

REST-HOUSE CONSTRUCTION

ABOVE, A TEMPORARY EUROPEAN REST-HOUSE IN PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTION. THE LOWER PICTURE SHOWS THE HOUSE COMPLETED AND THE TENT IN WHICH I LIVED DURING THE BUILDING.

The same principle is extended to the junior relatives of the mother's kindred. Thus a mother's brother's son, even if younger than the speaker, must always be addressed by a term of respect, and not familiarly by his birth-name like a father's junior brother's son. The reason is that on the death of the mother's brothers the headship of the mother's kindred will descend to the mother's eldest brother's son.

Not only the mother's brother's son who actually becomes head of the mother's brother's kindred, but all the mother's brothers' sons, however young, will be addressed as "uncle," and no longer as "cousin," after the death of the mother's last surviving brother, and treated with the same respect as was formerly given to the mother's brother.

The position of the disciplinary heads of the maternal uncle's family, as also of the father's kin *vis-à-vis* their own, their brothers' and their sisters' children (*i.e.* their "children" in the classificatory sense), is strengthened by the rules which require the observance of a strict etiquette as between children (with certain already-noted exceptions in the case of an eldest child) and their uncles and aunts.

These rules do not apply, however, to the mother's brother's wife with whom a man is a comrade-in-sport, or to the father's sister's husband, on whose head a man may, if occasion arises, heap any indignities he chooses.

Children are strictly brought up to speak to their "fathers" and "mothers"—as their real parents, uncles and aunts are more or less indiscriminately called—only when spoken to. The actual extent of the discrimination

is that there are special terms to denote "mother's brother" and "father's sister." Father, father's brother and mother's sister's husband are classed together as "father"; while mother, mother's sister and father's brother's wife are classed together as "mother."

The members of the younger generation are not expected to initiate a conversation with any of these relatives, and even after they are grown up it is considered the height of bad manners for a child to express an opinion contrary to that of its "parents." The expression of a mild difference of opinion is permissible as between the child and its actual father; but not even the slightest indication of disagreement is tolerated between it and its father's sister or mother's brother, the two relatives held most in awe.

The correct attitude for a grown-up man, for example, when being "pi-jawed" by his father's sister is to listen in silence, covering his face with his hands in shame. If a man meets a "father" or "mother" on the road he will kneel down in respectful salutation until they have passed, and if his wife is with him she will do the same. It is otherwise, however, if the wife is alone, for she is a "comrade-in-sport" with her husband's father, as will be explained later.

When the education and moral instruction of boys is sufficiently far advanced—that is to say, when they have learned their tribal catechism—they are sponsored by their guardians at one of the periodical public initiation ceremonies, the effect of which is to initiate the youths politically into membership of the tribe, socially into membership of the men's associations and religiously into a mystical communion with the local

ancestral spirits, and through them with other spiritual powers and the Supreme Being.

These boys' initiation rites are not at the present day closely associated with the rite of circumcision, as, *e.g.*, among the nomad Fulani, where youths belonging to a given initiation class are circumcised in batches, every few years. Among the Kwottos there is no special time for the operation. It is usually performed at any time between birth and the age of four years. The only explanation I could obtain for the existence of the custom was that it rendered the person more attractive to females, who would have nothing to do with an uncircumcised youth.

As regards girls, neither clitoridectomy nor any analogous operation is performed, nor are any special female initiation or puberty rites observed.

In effect, however, the peculiar practices and avoidances observed by girls on marriage may perhaps be regarded as constituting special puberty customs, since a betrothed girl is usually formally wedded and takes up her residence in her husband's house as soon as she attains puberty. Thus, such marriage rites as the seclusion of the newly wedded wife and the avoidance by her of either conversation or marital relations with her husband during the first few months of their living together may have originally been designed to safeguard the individual and the community from dangerous spiritual influences—felt to be strongest at times of passage or crisis, such as birth, maturity and death—and be explained by reference to the widespread custom in other parts of the world of secluding and specially treating or doctoring girls at puberty.

It is also worthy of note that such ceremonial observances, by symbolising and temporarily enforcing mutual restraint between bridegroom and bride in the matter both of sexual and social converse, perform a further sociological function. For they tend, by the social recognition accorded to this conventional adjustment of the relations between the sexes, to perpetuate the attitudes of mind symbolised, as an ideal tribal standard of marital ethics designed to protect the institution of marriage from disruption. The fact that ideal standards, as in all societies, are not reached by the majority of individuals does not, of course, detract from the sociological value of setting them for such earnest and impressionable persons as may profit by the moral lessons of self-restraint and forbearance to be derived from the conscientious performance of such puberty rites.

In contrast to the above restraints imposed between the sexes on their entering the wedded state it is noteworthy that prior to their attaining physiological puberty the recognised social code of sexual morality among the Kwottos, as among the Cow Fulani, connives at a certain measure of sexual freedom between young unmarried persons, although at the same time enjoining certain formal avoidances in public between betrothed persons.

For example, the custom known as "*tsaranchi*" is practised, by which young unmarried boys and girls sleep together with the connivance of their parents. This custom is a widespread Sudanic institution, and is claimed by those tribes who practise it, such as the Kwottos, to result in the formation of more happy

unions than would be possible without it, on account of the elements of personal choice and trial and error introduced. Under this system a boy may sleep frequently with his betrothed or with other unbetrothed girls, or even with girls who are betrothed to another. The boy will first salute his intended lover's "parents" (*i.e.* in the classificatory sense of the term) and, if the "mother" of the girl approves, she will vacate her own sleeping-hut, leaving it free for the use of the young persons.

It must not be supposed, however, that, because the custom of *tsaranchi* is tolerated, and the youth of both sexes are allowed some voice in the determination of their life-partners, immature youths are at all generally entrusted with the responsibility of making their own marriage arrangements. On the other hand the ultimate right of choice is vested in the hands of the young people's elders, who view the matter primarily as a civil contract, to be concluded between them according to considerations of convenience. Owing to the early age at which they are made it will be obvious that most betrothals are originally arranged by the guardians of the young people, the latter having the right to repudiate them before the marriage takes place if they are willing to face the displeasure of their elder relatives and to stand the economic loss involved.

As a girl is usually married soon after attaining the age of puberty it follows that the prenuptial *tsaranchi* child-relationships do not frequently result in conception. It would further appear that in many cases they do not even result in the loss of virginity, but amount merely to the mutual practice of forms of

sexual "play," falling short of actual coition. This, at any rate, is suggested by the fact that, notwithstanding the social recognition given to the custom of *tsaranchi*, prenuptial chastity is by no means regarded as unimportant.

It is, for instance, considered disgraceful for a girl who marries a man, with whom she has not practised *tsaranchi* (*e.g.* if she marries a married man as his second wife), to be found not *virgo intacta* by her husband on marriage. In such an event the latter will sometimes send her back to her parents to be chastised. If, on the other hand, the husband finds his newly wedded wife a virgin he will give her, as also sometimes her parents, presents in recognition.

A customary form of chastisement inflicted on a bride by her parents in the above circumstances for the offence of prenuptial unchastity is to tie up the girl in her parents' house, or in the "bush," for several days, give her a starvation diet, and beat her with a light cane daily. Such treatment of an erring female child resembles in some respects the punishments (of beating, starving and frightening with spirits) meted out to rebellious male children in the forest during the period of preparation for initiation into adult membership of the tribe. It will thus be seen that in essentials the methods adopted to discipline children in native society do not differ widely from the popular nursery punishments of our civilisation — standing in the corner, smacking and sending to bed on a diet of bread and water, and frightening into obedience through fear of the "bogey man."

It is obviously too much trouble for the parents to

punish every case of lapse into temptation committed between children actually betrothed who are allowed to sleep together. Consequently one finds that no serious disgrace is considered to attach to a girl bearing a child before marriage provided her fiancé is the father. On the other hand it may be regarded by the parents of the parties concerned as a matter for congratulation, presumably because the fertility of the bride has been proved and children are of economic importance. For boys even at an early age assist in agricultural work, and the girls, as will be seen, are espousal-fee and relatives'-in-law-labour winners, and not, as among us, liabilities for many years.

It is, however, considered a disgrace for an unbetrothed girl to become enceinte, for this definitely reduces her value in the betrothal market; and an attempt may be made to cause her to abort by drinking "medicine," or to affiance her before delivery in consideration of a reduced espousal fee.

If a betrothed girl has a child by other than her fiancé he could refuse to marry her, but the fiancé will usually say that it is his own, and the parents will support him in this fiction. The position is, in fact, rather like that arising in England in cases of uncertain parentage, where it is generally held that if opportunity for access is proved the presumption is that a child born in wedlock is the offspring of its legal parents.

The young mother might, however, in these circumstances prefer the suitor who was the father of her child to her betrothed. If the latter agreed to give up his claims on the girl the other suitor would then have to pay two espousal fees in order to marry her, one to

the parents and the other by way of refund to the disappointed fiancé.

As the existence of a number of successive fiancés thus adds to their wealth, some parents unscrupulously encourage a number of suitors. This is, of course, grossly unfair to the boy finally accepted, who has to compensate all the rest for the loss of any instalments of the espousal fee which they may have paid. A distinction is made in such circumstances between the espousal fee and courtship presents. Where the girl breaks off the engagement by arrangement the boy is entitled to the return, by those who have received them, of all presents made by him, both to his fiancée and her parents. A careful account is accordingly kept of these as a measure of prudence.

If the boy breaks off the engagement, which he is free to do without paying damages, he loses all such gifts, and also any instalments of the espousal fee, or the value of agricultural service in lieu, which he may have paid. Formerly the espousal fee was estimated in terms of agricultural service as follows. The suitor had to work at intervals for a period of years, usually three, on the farm of his prospective father-in-law. He had also to supply one large bundle of corn per year to his fiancée's parents, and build one large hut for his father-in-law. The exchange value of this work is nowadays computed at eleven pounds, which is, consequently, recognised as an average espousal fee.

Where a woman has relations with a succession of suitors, under the system described above, it follows that a dispute may occasionally arise as to the father of children born. In such a case the matter is referred to

a diviner, who it is considered will be able to obtain the opinion of the ancestral ghosts of the parties on the subject. Should the woman refuse to accept the decision of the diviner the woman's hand is not forced, but the child is disposed of on the basis of her affirmation.

Should the child subsequently sicken, it would be considered supernatural proof that the diviner was right and the woman was wrong, and she would be invited to admit her error and change the disposal of the child to save its life, and it is said that women placed in this position often do so. Nevertheless she would not be compelled to recant, and if the child died as a result, it would be regarded as a divine judgment, and the matter would be left there.

Disputes as to parentage do not often arise, as, in a society where all children belong to the legal husband in the absence of an arrangement by the natural father to purchase, the question of physiological fatherhood is not of much economic importance.

Side by side with the practice of *tsaranchi* and the observance of seasonal festivals, at which the conventional prohibitions of everyday life are set aside and something approaching unfettered licence between young unmarried persons is tolerated, are found certain rigid restrictions on the behaviour of betrothed persons, the reason given being that familiarity breeds contempt. Since, under a system whereby a girl may be betrothed from within a few months of birth, or even when still unborn, and may not be married until the age of puberty, engagements of up to ten or twelve years' duration are common, there seems to be some sense in this arrangement.

Thus from the day of betrothal to the day of marriage a betrothed girl may not eat or drink in front of her fiancé, and avoids either meeting or talking to him in public. In fact, were she to break either of these rules, such conduct would be interpreted as an indication on her part that she did not love him. An occasional breaking of these rules would not itself be held to invalidate the betrothal, unless those who arranged the betrothal desired it. But since, if she really disliked her fiancé, she would probably run away from his house on marriage, a continued indication of dislike by her might well lead to an alteration of the existing arrangements.

The betrothed boy, on his part, similarly maintains an attitude of silence in public towards his fiancée. He also avoids eating in her presence, since it is regarded as bad form for a man at any time, betrothed or not, to be seen eating by a woman.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Wedding Rites & Domestic Life

AMONG the Kwottos, wedding rites are signalised by the holding of a festival at the bridegroom's house.

The bride is escorted from the house of her parents by the "best girl," together with all available other female relatives of the husband, including aunts, sisters and cousins—but not including the husband's mother —as well as by the corresponding female relatives of the bride. The father and mother of the bride do not personally join the escort, but they are both represented —the father by a young boy who has reached puberty but is younger than the bridegroom, and the mother by a young girl belonging to the same kindred as herself, usually one of her brother's or male cousin's daughters. The young boy representing the bride's father is the only male member of the procession, and it is he who hands over the bride to the husband's kindred on arrival.

These arrangements differ considerably from the corresponding regulations peculiar to the local (Muslim) Fulani and Hausas, which it may be of interest to give for the sake of comparison. There seems to be a tendency in the larger Kwotto villages for the last-mentioned wedding customs to displace the indigenous practices, due to the social influence exerted therein by the Fulani ruling class.

Among the local Fulani the wedding rites, as well as the wedding feast, are held at the bride's house. The former include the staining of the feet and hands of the bride with henna and her being ceremonially bathed. On their conclusion the bride is escorted from the house of her parents to her new home by a party, which, in contrast to the predominantly female procession of the Kwottos, includes a "best man," and may include the following male relatives—younger brothers of the father of the bride, younger brothers of the mother of the bridegroom, younger brothers of the bride and younger brothers of the bridegroom. Seniority ideas operate to prevent the corresponding elder brothers attending. Of the elder brothers of the bridegroom and bridegroom's father it is said that they would "be ashamed" (*Ji kumya*) to attend, because they "might lust after their junior's (or their junior's son's) bride on such an occasion, which would be an evil thing."

Among the Kwottos the day the bride leaves her parents' house she refrains from washing and puts on old cloths. Were she to do otherwise it would be said: "She has no modesty. She is in an undue hurry to dress up." She will also affect an unwillingness to go, and cause herself to be dragged away by the escort, crying in protest. Such a simulation of capture occurring in connection with other tribes has been variously interpreted as in origin a relic of a prior custom of marriage by capture, a protest against the payment of the espousal fee, or as an assertion of the girl's right to choose her own life-partner. It seems as simple, however, to explain it as a mere marital pantomime, a sort of primitive "Apache" display, the conduct of the escort represent-

ing the wooing ardour of the male, and that of the bride the coyness and pretended or actual reluctance to yield herself up of the female.

On this view the dramatic performance of capture in the marriage rites merely symbolises appropriation, or, as Dr Hobhouse says in an analogous connection, it "is not necessarily a survival of something more real, but may be rather a legal expression of the character of the act performed."

The bridegroom shaves his head completely on the wedding day.

After arrival at the husband's house the bride is prepared for the wedding ceremony by having her feet and hands stained with henna (*lelle*). This takes two days. On the morning of the third day she is ceremonially washed in the presence of her own and her husband's female relatives and friends.

The ceremony is held usually in the courtyard of the compound. The young bride is brought in and placed on a woman's stool, where she sits with bent head in an attitude of humility. Her headdress is taken off, the coiffure with which she came from her parents' house undone, and the cloths in which she arrived removed. Water is then brought, and her head sprinkled three times with it, after which some is thrown three times into her lap. The attendant crowd march round in a circle meanwhile, singing, dancing and drumming.

One of the objects of thus sprinkling the head and lap with water would appear to be to infuse new female spiritual and fertility power into the bride, at the same time driving out any remaining evil spirit of spinsterhood and symbolising her change of state. One may

perhaps compare the sprinkling of the lap with the sprinkling of magical water on the fields at the commencement of the yam season to ensure fertility; and the sprinkling of the head with the practice in other religions of baptizing the head of converts to indicate the expulsion of any remaining evil influence of heathendom and the acquisition of new spiritual life.

After the above preliminaries the whole of the bride's body is scrubbed with soap and water, after which her coiffure is rearranged, her new wedding finery put on, and she is paraded about and admired. Tasty fare and plenty of beer is provided for friends and relatives attending the ceremony, and, judging by the noise which I have on occasion heard continuing throughout the night, the proceedings sometimes become distinctly animated.

On the completion of the celebrations the relatives of the husband escort the relatives of the bride—with the exception of the young girl chosen by the bride's mother, who stays behind — back to their homes, together with a present of fifty shillings, termed "the bride-washing fee" (*kurdin wanka*). This is given to the father of the bride, who divides forty shillings among his own relatives and gives the remaining ten shillings to his wife for distribution among hers.

The small girl representing the mother of the bride remains at the husband's house for three months, during which period, it will be recollected, custom requires the marriage to remain unconsummated. She acts as maidservant to the bride. At the expiry of this period she is sent home by the husband with a suitable present.

Finally, in connection with the custom of bride-washing, it is interesting to note that the practice has been reported also from Europe. In Bulgaria, it is said, until recent years the women washed their whole person only once in their lives — the evening before marriage. The two bridesmaids were expected to look on; they also were naked, but they were not allowed to bathe.

For some time after the marriage certain ceremonial observances are kept up. For at least three months after the wedding day, and often longer, the marriage remains unconsummated, the bride refrains from uttering a single word to her husband, and also from eating food from his household, relying instead on that supplied by her relatives or obtained by herself. The reason for these observances has been suggested in the previous chapter.

Another form of avoidance, practised by married couples throughout life, is the refraining from uttering each other's personal names, whether in their presence or absence. It is explained that a husband would be regarded as slighting his wife's kindred if he were to show her so little respect as to address her familiarly by the birth-name given her by her own kindred. He therefore gives her a new "marriage-name."

These names are, by etymology, terms of endearment —such as "darling," "love," "sweetheart"—but they function, not, like the latter, as temporary and interchangeable nicknames, but as permanent forms of address for use by various members of the husband's household. In practice certain of these names are usually reserved for a first wife, others for a second

wife, and so on. Some examples, which I was given, together with the explanations of them, freely translated, were *masoi* ("the person whom I hold in awe"), *nyabami* ("my own one"), *ohi* ("bride"), *onyami* ("little sister"), *agemi* ("the person who dries my eyes when I cry"), *suniya* ("the refresher of him who is thirsty"), *makogi* ("whom I have desired ever since I was born"), *ali* ("a person of fine character"), and so on. Before strangers a husband commonly avoids these affectionate forms of address, and calls his wife interjectionally, or by a term descriptive of her relationship in her own kindred—*e.g.* "Come here, you!" or "Sister of so-and-so!"

The first wife, who has authority over the junior wives, although she may be the youngest in years, similarly addresses them by their "marriage-names." It would be as disrespectful for her as it would be for her husband to address them by their birth-names, and for the same reason.

Junior wives similarly avoid the personal name of the head wife, and they are also debarred from using her "marriage-name." They have to address her by a special term of respect, "*Nizami*" ("Madame"). Co-junior wives commonly address each other as "*Ohinami*" ("My fellow-wife"), and not by their marriage-names or personal names.

Wives similarly may not address their husband by his birth-name. They may call him by his rank, if any, or respectful nickname, or otherwise by a term of respect, such as "my elder one" or "father or master of my house." The latter expression, however, may be used only by a first wife. If she hears a junior wife using

DANCE OF "MAI-KARIFI" (THE STRONG MAN)

A STRONG MAN GIVING A DISPLAY AT A PUBLIC GATHERING.

this term she will take it as a personal insult to herself, and much bad feeling will be caused.

Married persons also practise certain avoidances in relation to the parents of their spouses.

Thus if a man sees his mother-in-law coming to greet his wife he will leave her the whole road, kneel at the side, and cover his face and bend his head in salutation, avoiding looking in her face; or, better still, if the opportunity presented itself, he would take a different road, so as to avoid meeting her at all.

Further, when a man visits his parents-in-law, or they visit him, he may not eat in their presence. Similarly, a woman married to an eldest son is not expected to enter the presence of, much less speak to, her husband's father. If she sees him on the road, etiquette requires that she should make a deviation in order to avoid meeting him.

The kinship usages obtaining between a man and his younger sons' wives are, on the other hand, quite the reverse of those just described, since they are "comrades-in-sport" with each other.

Among the Kwottos a man is a "comrade-in-sport" with his patrilineal "grandparents" (and their husbands and wives), his elder brother's wife and his maternal uncle's wife, and, to a more limited extent, with his matrilineal grandparents, his wife's younger sister, the wife of a younger son and his grandchildren (and their husbands and wives).

The subject of the function and social value to the community of the institution of comradeship-in-sport in general is too technical to be discussed in this book. Here, however, it may be remarked that the reason for

the existence of a joking and playful relationship between a woman and her husband's "fathers" (*i.e.* real male parent and his brothers, all of whom live together in the same household) is, no doubt, partly connected with the peculiar functions which a wife fulfils in her husband's parents' family.

To appreciate these functions it is necessary to be acquainted with some, at least, of the profound differences between the organisation of the Kwotto family and our own. The basis of society for most practical purposes among the Kwottos is what is known technically as the "extended family" or "undivided patrilineal household," and not, as among us, the "restricted" or "biological" family, consisting of a man, his wife and their children. The "extended family," as the name suggests, includes a wider group of relatives, and can perhaps be most easily explained by a reference to our own kinship system.

Among us the family is patronymic—that is to say, all the children take the father's name. Thus the husband, his sons and their male descendants through males, together with unmarried daughters and wives, are segregated as Smiths or Joneses. Suppose that instead of a wife taking the name of her husband she retained the name of her father, but that the children nevertheless took the name of their father; and suppose that instead of living separately from their parents and grandparents, as in our society, all close relatives (*i.e.* grandfathers and grand-uncles, maiden grand-aunts, fathers, uncles and maiden aunts, brothers, cousins and maiden sisters, sons and unmarried daughters, grandsons and unmarried granddaughters) and their wives

lived together in the same compound, or at least in the same village or town, where they could forgather for purposes of co-operation. Suppose, further, that all these relatives were under the control, real or nominal, of the oldest man of the oldest generation (not, as in the patriarchal type of family, under the eldest male lineal ascendant), then a family of Smiths or Joneses would approximate in composition to a "Kwotto extended family." The only important difference would be the absence of adopted children and household slaves, which latter are still to be found in many Kwotto families, although by the operation of the Nigerian anti-slavery ordinances they are almost due to disappear as legally recognised social units.

From the above it will be seen that the Kwotto extended family is a unilateral grouping of kin, determined by consanguinity and not by affinity. It therefore excludes wives, who, although belonging to the restricted family of their husband, do not enter into the extended family of which he is a member, since they do not bear the family name.

The advantage in a savage community of an "extended" over a "restricted" family as a unit for practical purposes is obvious, where danger from wild beasts and predatory slave-raiding neighbours, to mention but two conditions of primitive life, can better be met by co-operation between groups of individuals united by the strong band of consanguinity than by the enterprise of individuals. Nowadays, however, there is a tendency, still only incipient, under the influence of the settled conditions which everywhere prevail under the Pax Britannica, for individualism and the

biological-family idea to develop at the expense of the joint-family conceptions.

Perhaps the most striking psychological difference between the institution of the extended and the restricted family is the way in which women and children are regarded. This follows quite naturally from the structural difference in the social unit. In the extended family both wives and children are regarded not so much as belonging to the restricted family as to the whole family group. This conception is responsible for a number of usages which accord strangely with our ideas.

The logical limit of this method of regarding women is reached by the Yoruba of Osi, as also by the Yoruba of Ekiti (who belong to the same general culture-zone as the Kwottos), of whom it has been reported that at the present day " every male in a compound has access to every female, except in case of close consanguinity. Sons have access to their father's wives, their own mothers excepted, and even brides are free to all." [1] Such customs are not, however, practised by the Kwottos, whose views on the subject of the right of access to adult wives by other than their husbands would appear to be both as strict and as loose as they are in European society.

Another corollary to the notion of wives as the property of the family group is the practice—which will be referred to in detail later—by which widows are normally inherited by certain junior relatives of their husbands in order that their services may be retained in the family. The custom, which also tends to strengthen the solidarity of the extended family, of fathers handing

over their children to their brothers to be brought up has already been mentioned. Such an arrangement obviously reduces the possible amount of practical co-operation between fathers and their own offspring, and thereby largely prevents the formation of too strongly individualistic father-and-child combinations, which through fratricidal group jealousies might tend to wreck the unity of the undivided household. Under the conditions which prevail, on the other hand, a man has an incentive not to alienate the sympathy of a brother, on whose good will the happiness of his own children depends, and is provided, moreover, with a definite object in endeavouring to cultivate the most cordial possible fraternal relations.

Another valuable social result of this custom of children being brought up by, and thereafter remaining under the control of, other than their real parents is the mitigation of the intense jealousies inseparable from the institution of a biological family, consisting of a man plus more than one wife plus children by more than one wife, all living together with their parents. There is a distinct tendency in a polygynous society, such as that of the Kwottos (*i.e.* a society which allows of males having more than one legal wife at the same time), for the sons of different mothers by the same father to have a strong dislike of each other. Life might easily at times become almost intolerable owing to rival sons quarrelling over the discrimination shown in the treatment of the different mothers, in a restricted family where such sons were brought up by their real parents. And I hazard the guess that the growth of interfilial jealousy and ill-will, tending to rend the institution of

the restricted family asunder, may have been one of the causes which led to the adoption of the custom of bringing up children after weaning under a different roof from that of their mother.

A woman among the Kwottos, when she marries, and thereby helps to found a restricted family, although she does not become a member of the extended family to which her husband belongs, nevertheless comes effectively under its control. In fact, as regards domestic duties, she owes allegiance primarily to the "parents" of her husband, and only secondarily to him. This state of affairs may have arisen partly from the conception of woman (and, consequently, her labour) as family property. But it must also be correlated to the position of juniority, and obligation to serve his elders, which the woman's husband occupies in the joint household. It might well be regarded by a man as an intolerable condition that he should be liable to be ordered about by his "parents," who are the disciplinary heads and directors of the joint labour of the household, in the presence of his wife, and that she should be able to look on and laugh. The dignity of his position in the eyes of his wife in such circumstances, however, would not suffer at all if she were equally obliged by convention to take orders from her husband's seniors, and this we find is actually so.

Both a husband and his wives are obliged, by tribal custom, to put the interests of the disciplinary heads of the joint or "extended" household before those of their own "restricted" or "biological" family. Thus a wife, equally with her husband, has to give prior attention to the requests for domestic assistance made

by her husband's uncles and aunts, and even elder brothers and sisters, and only after these are performed may she attend to her husband's requirements. What might in theory be thought to be a difficulty on the part of juniors in discriminating between conflicting requests from seniors does not in practice arise, for the order of precedence of the different members of the household, according to which they are allowed to requisition the services of their juniors and their juniors' wives, is clearly understood.

Thus a wife pays attention to the requirements of her husband's seniors in the following order—father's elder brothers, father's younger brothers, own elder brothers, own younger brothers, father's elder sisters, father's younger sisters, and own elder sisters. Should the wife survive the above relatives and her husband, however, her domestic services will not thereby be lost to the extended family. For (unless she marries her husband's sister's son, or other arrangements are made) one of her husband's junior relatives (usually a younger brother or, failing a younger brother, the son of the next senior brother) will normally inherit her.

Apart from any idea of the social juniority of women, an obvious reason why a man and his wives should (as detailed above) deal with requests for assistance from their female blood relatives only after the requirements of all their male relatives have been considered is the fact that a man's female relatives will mostly live with their husbands in other households. The existence, however, of an obligation on the part of all the junior male relatives of a married woman to consider requests for any assistance she may see fit to make of them has

far-reaching social effects. On the one hand it serves, through the agency of mutual co-operation, to knit together all sufficiently closely domiciled extended families related to each other by marriage. On the other hand the possibility of interference by a wife's male relatives tends to safeguard the social rights of married women and to protect them from excessive exploitation or unfair treatment at the hands of their husbands or the latter's kin.

Indeed, in flagrant cases of abuse by a man of his marital privileges, custom allows the woman's junior male relatives to chastise the erring husband in his own house without interference on his behalf by his own relatives.

A man is required by custom to pay an exaggerated respect to both his wife's "brothers" and his wife's brothers' sons, and it is considered the height of bad form for him to show disrespect, even under provocation, to any of these relatives.

This is contrary to the practice of the Cow Fulani, among whom a man and his wife's younger brothers are "comrades-in-sport." A Kwotto, on the other hand, "jokes" with his wife's younger sisters, whom he may not marry. A Cow Fulani may not "joke" with such, but, on the death of his wife, he may marry them.

The reason that among the Kwottos a man is allowed to exercise control over his elder brother's wife, in spite of the fact that he must himself obey the orders of his elder brother, is that the woman is a potential mate of his, since he may inherit her on the death of her husband.

The reason that is given for a woman refusing her husband's requests until she has complied with those of his relatives is that, were she to do otherwise, her action would be interpreted as done under the compulsion of her husband. His ill-will towards his relatives and, indeed, his lack of regard for the authority of his elders would, consequently, be inferred, with the result that the solidarity of the kindred would be endangered through jealousy and bad feeling.

Another reason is that failure on the wife's part to render help would react adversely on her own kindred. For the principle of compensation is everywhere active in Kwotto society, and it is understood that, in return for her services to her husband's kindred, all his relatives, led by himself, will sally forth, when her relatives ask for help, to render necessary assistance in time of need. For example, they may render temporary extra labour (*gaya*) on her husband's household's farms at certain seasons of the year.

Another sphere in which the authority of the disciplinary heads of the undivided patrilineal household supersedes that of the heads of the restricted families within it is in the arrangement of the marriage of its members. In practice, since the uniting of members of two extended families in marriage may, indirectly through their relatives, affect the fortunes of the entire kindred, the final decision concerning it is usually taken by certain of the senior members of the kindred. Actually the father's eldest sister usually has most to do with the arranging of a man's marriage, and the father's eldest brother with that of a woman. The mother's relatives are often consulted by the paternal relatives out

of courtesy, and the mother's brothers and sisters may also contribute to the espousal fee which the sister's son has to pay to the parents of his bride.

It has already been mentioned that the mother's brother receives a portion of the "bride-washing fee" paid over to the paternal relatives in respect of the former's sister's daughter.

If, however, the son has not sufficient money of his own out of which to provide the espousal fee, it is his father's brothers and sisters, and especially the latter—who may, of course, receive assistance from their own husbands' relatives—who furnish the lion's share of the money required. Elder brothers and sisters are also liable to contribute to their younger brother's needs, if required to do so by their seniors.

Such assistance on the part of a man's elders, it will be seen, amounts in practice to compensation to juniors for the obedience and service they habitually render to the former. The reason for the father's sister providing a larger contribution than the father's brother is that her property will ultimately be inherited by her brothers and their children, and not by her own children, who belong to a different totem clan. It is, therefore, considered to be in her interest to do all she can by her help to ensure a satisfactory marriage being contracted by her brother's son, that her property may ultimately be passed on to praiseworthy descendants.

NOTE

[1] *Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, vol. i., p. 200.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Death, Burial & Eschatological Beliefs

THE occurrence of a death in a Kwotto village is signalised by the shrieking, shouting and wailing of women and children and the beating of gongs. If the death takes place in the evening this noise is kept up at intervals throughout the night, as the body will not be buried before daylight. It is a strange and alarming experience, for one who is unprepared for it, to be awakened from sleep by such a babel of lamentation.

The common primitive practice of making as much noise as possible on these occasions has been explained by some writers as probably in origin partly intended to frighten away the evil spirits which have stolen the soul of the deceased. Thus Mr Meek, explaining the noise made in various ways by Northern Nigerian pagan tribes in general on the announcement of death, writes: "These rites have for their object the driving away of the evil spirits that have snatched the dead man's soul, but they are also a signal to the deceased's kin to come and join in the funeral ceremony." [1]

There appears to be no such conscious intention of driving away evil spirits on the part of the Kwottos at the present day. The principal modern functions of the procedure seem to be threefold.

The first is that the beating of the gongs serves to attract attention. It thus causes a crowd to gather

together, who by their presence give social recognition to the carrying out of the traditional — and in some respects unpleasant—sacred duties to the dead, which might otherwise be shirked.

The natural tendency to flee from the unburied dead in superstitious terror, it has already been pointed out, actually operates on occasion at the present day among the nomad Cattle Fulani, whose mode of life is incompatible with the existence of large social territorial groupings.

Secondly, the public dramatisation of grief, which the wailing of the women and children constitutes, helps to support the bereaved through the critical initial period of their grief. It also prevents the latter from becoming unbalanced—a real danger among excitable savages—and socially harmful through solitary introspection or superstitious fear of being alone with the dead.

Thirdly, the presence of a large crowd and an elaborate ceremonial dramatisation of grief constitutes a friendly gesture on the part of the community to both the bereaved relatives and the spirit of the deceased. This tends to strengthen, at the same time, both the solidarity of the society of the living and the bonds which, it is believed, unite the community here on earth with the communion of ancestral spirits in the afterworld. This communion is regarded by the Kwotto ancestor-worshippers in the light of an ever-present and concrete though unseen reality, and daily forms the basis of the regulation of many of the actions of the living.

If the deceased has friends or relatives in neighbour-

ing hamlets or villages, messengers are dispatched thither without delay.

Such a messenger, whom I saw arrive in the village of Shefan Kwotto, one evening started a long drawn-out and mournful wail as soon as he passed through the entrance gate in the defensive walls of the village, drawing attention to his mission in much the same pitch of voice as might a European town-crier.

Burial usually takes place within twenty-four hours of death, whether or not all the relatives or friends of the deceased have collected. There is no attempt at the present day, as among the neighbouring Ganaganas, to preserve the body temporarily by fumigation until the gathering together of all the mourners is complete. But it is said that a similar custom of preserving the body was formerly practised by the Kwottos.

As regards the preservation of bodies in Northern Nigeria, Mr Meek opines that this "would seem to be less connected with the cult of the dead than a convenient means of gaining time for making the funeral arrangements and summoning relatives from different villages." [2]

I think, however, it is permissible to doubt whether the above is the true historical reason for the Ganagana and former Kwotto practice. The original intention may well have been to dry up the blood of the corpse as soon as possible as an aid to the release of the dead man's spirit, as is done in certain parts of the Congo.[3] For, the "matter" or "maternal" soul (*kofi*) of a man being held to permeate his blood, it follows that the soul cannot be resurrected while the blood remains in the body.

All the funeral arrangements, including the preparation of the body, the digging of the grave and the actual inhumation, are carried out by juniors and friends. Senior relatives, such as grandfathers, fathers, uncles or elder brothers, do not take any part in such arrangements, nor do the children of the deceased—but this does not apply to elder or younger brothers' children—nor do any women.

The reason given for the exclusion of senior relatives from the obligation to attend to these matters, as also of the dead man's children, is that it is out of consideration for the broken-hearted condition to which they will be reduced. It would, I was informed, be far more painful for a grandfather to look on death than for a father to do so. The actual children of the deceased, I was told, far from taking part in the funeral rites, would run away and hide in terror until their performance was over.

The children of a deceased man will, however, share with the other junior relatives, such as younger brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces, in the funeral expenses, which include the provision of the burial cloths, the reward—given in meat and drink—of friends who have assisted at the ceremony, and the cost of the graveside sacrifice and subsequent funeral feast. It is customary for all these expenses to be defrayed by the juniors belonging to the deceased's kindred, without the assistance of the seniors.

As a woman's husband and children belong to a different totem clan from herself, totem descent being reckoned through males, it follows that they have no primary concern with the arrangements for her funeral.

They, however, as well as other relatives outside the kindred — *e.g.* sons-in-law — are expected to assist her relatives in defraying the expenses.

A woman's corpse is prepared for burial by being rubbed over with (red) camwood dye (*majigi*); and a man's by being washed with water. The feet and hands are tied together and the mouth bound up. The remaining orifices of the body do not appear ordinarily to be closed with cotton, as among the Jukun. The loins are wound round with a blue cloth for a man, or a black cloth for a woman. Several fine winding-cloths, usually three, are added on top of each other, and the whole is covered with a richly embroidered wrap. The quality of the cloths varies with the means, but it is regarded as a point of honour to provide the finest that can be afforded.

The corpse of a man is escorted from the house to the grave by men only, to the accompaniment of drumming and the sounding of the man's cult-cry ("*Kasheeee-ji*"), to warn women to keep out of the way, for they may not look on a male corpse. Even where house burial is practised, the body is first carried through the village before being taken to the grave prepared for it. This serves as a public announcement of the death.

A woman's body, before being taken to the grave, is carried to the market-place, on a bier, where dances are performed around it for several hours, the men dancing the Esara dance and the women the Anyo dance. This constitutes the women's leave-taking of the corpse, for the escorting of the body from the market to the grave and its interment are carried out by men only.

The shaft-and-tunnel form of grave is used. A shaft

is dug into the ground about five feet deep. From the base of the shaft a tunnel is made, about six feet long by about three feet diameter. The corpse is laid full length in the grave—if a man, facing east, if a woman, facing west.

It is explained that facing east is an appropriate position for a man, for, in life, his cry tended to be: "The sun has risen (in the east). Let us hurry up and leave our homes (and get on with our farm or other work)." Facing west is appropriate for a woman because her cry in life tended to be: "The sun will soon set (in the west). Let us hurry up and return home (and carry on our domestic life)."

No property is buried in the commoner's grave, with the exception of the funeral garments, the mat on which the corpse is laid, and the personal protective charms of the deceased.

After the grave has been filled a sacrifice of a male animal for a man, or a female for a woman, is made at the graveside by those present (*i.e.* the junior relatives or friends) and a prayer is offered.

I was informed that a typical graveside prayer would be in words somewhat as follows: "O elder brother, now that thou hast died, may Hinegba [the Sky-God] grant that thou mayest rest in peace. If a man killed thee on purpose, may he die a sudden death. And, as for we who are left, we beseech thee to help us, that our farms may prosper, as also our other occupations, and our women may be found with child. May Hinegba grant that you may enter the womb of a woman and be born again."

Only a deceased Village Head is invoked to give the

living rain, in the manner described elsewhere, this function being considered to be outside the province of a commoner.

On the return from the grave the mourners have first to purify themselves from the contamination of death by complete immersion in the river before proceeding to the next stage of the funeral rites.

On their return from the river to the house of the deceased's kindred a household sacrifice is offered through the mediumship of the household gods (Osekpa) at which all members of the kindred may be present.

The usual sites selected for graves are either in the bush or in a hut or in the courtyard of the compound of the deceased. There is a sentiment among some in favour of burial in the bush, on the ground that if a person is buried in a house, and the house becomes disused, villagers may come and unwittingly dig up the site of the grave in search of earth with which to build a new house, and in so doing disturb the bones.

Where hut or courtyard burial is practised the earth is beaten down hard on top of the stone which closes the shaft of the grave. Cowries or potsherds or bits of broken crockery are then beaten into it, to form an ornamental design, usually circular, to mark the site. This is in lieu of the monoliths, stone circles, or piles of stones surmounted by a monolith, which are used to mark the sites of graves in the bush. The particular type of memorial selected depends on the social status of the deceased.

Near some of the larger Kwotto villages I have seen graveyards of considerable size, with monoliths,

sometimes tied round with white cotton-cloth as a sign of mourning, neatly arranged in rows.

This seems to suggest that graveyard burial may be increasing in popularity, which would be a highly desirable state of affairs from a sanitary point of view. It is perhaps hardly necessary to add that the change, if such it be, is not due to any direct pressure exercised by the Government on the Kwottos to persuade them to change their sacred burial customs.

Over the graves of important chiefs and elders, such as the principal title-holders in the Court of the Paramount Chief of Panda, it used to be the custom to place images of the deceased. In the presence of these the ghosts (*ekiti*) of the dead were invoked and sacrificial offerings made to them by their grandchildren.

The grave of an important man, if in the bush, is covered over with a thatched roof, and surrounded by mud or thatched walls as a protection. If situated in a hut the grave has already, of course, the required shelter.

Finally, one comes to the consideration of the purpose of, or the ideas behind, the death and burial customs described in this chapter. For it is hardly necessary to say that among primitive peoples the mode of preparation of the dead body and the differences, if any, shown in the treatment of the sexes has usually some rational or symbolic significance connected with the native ideas concerning the destination or the nature of the soul of the deceased.

I do not profess to know on the basis of direct evidence what the Kwottos believe happens to the human personality after death, except in so far as their ideas on the subject are covered by what I have said

regarding the resurrection and reincarnation of the "sensory soul" (*ekiti*), for the simple reason that I omitted to inquire directly into the subject. It is even possible that it would have constituted a tactical error on my part to have done so, and that had I inquired directly from the natives into such a sacred matter I should have been met merely by a profession of ignorance.

The indirect evidence supplied by the details of the Kwotto magico-religious practices referred to in this book, however, seems to point to the probability of the existence of a belief in the following eschatological propositions, known to exist elsewhere in Africa. Firstly, the "paternal soul" (*ekiti*), on final dissociation from the body after death, returns, whence it is believed originally to have come, to an association with water, conceived as, in the form of rain in the sky, the source and home of the fertilising or male element in nature; and, secondly, the "maternal soul" (*kofi*) likewise, when released from the body, goes back whence it is believed originally to have come, to an association with earth, conceived as the source and home of the fertility or female element in nature. A caution should perhaps be added against interpreting these religious propositions too literally.

The association between the homes of the souls of the dead and water and earth is, no doubt, partly symbolic, in the same way as, to take an English example, the sky is symbolic of the theological heaven; the bowels of the earth used to be symbolic of Hades, or hell, and in Genesis the rainbow joining sky and earth is used as a symbol of the continuance of life.

Similar beliefs to those postulated above are known, on the authority of a number of well-qualified European observers, to be held by the Bakongo of Angola and the Congo. The Bakongo beliefs are to the effect that the "*mfumu kutu*," which is translated "sensory" or "paternal" soul, on death joins what are described as the "gens ancestors" under or near the water, and haunts rivers; while the "*moyo*," or "spiritual" or "maternal" soul, goes to the "clan ancestors" underground, and haunts the red earth of termite nests (*i.e.* soil fetched up from the depths of the earth).[4]

I suggest, on the analogy of the Bakongo beliefs, that the Kwotto custom of staining the female body red with camwood dye may be in origin a fertility rite—that is to say, the object may have been to set up a mystical connection between the "maternal soul" (*kofi*) and the earth.

There are many indications pointing in this direction. Thus the Kwottos' neighbours, the Gbari—as also the Malambu—stain a girl's body with camwood dye on the wedding day—a custom obviously connected with the idea of fertility: but I do not know how these two tribes treat the body on death.

The Muslim Fulani stain the feet and hands of a bride with henna, and also the hands of a corpse.

Another custom of the Gbari is also significant, whereby, on the occasion of magico-religious agricultural fertility rites, the tutelary genius of the tribe comes out with his body smeared all over with red clay and his head swathed in leaves. In this case there seems to be no room for doubt that the red clay and the leaves are female or fertility symbols—the red symbolising

blood and the leaves the putting forth of new life; and in this connection our own custom, whereby a bride carries flowers on her wedding day, and the custom among the peasantry of North Russia of dressing up the bride in red may, perhaps, be regarded as historical descendants of similar primitive European customs, which have long since lost their original magico-religious purpose.

The custom of staining corpses red has been reported also from Australia and America, while the Bakongo belief that the "maternal soul" haunts the red earth of termite nests has already been mentioned.

The washing of the male corpse with water does not appear at first sight a very distinctive operation, and may conceivably be carried out with the simple and only object of cleansing the body. On the other hand, if one supposes water to have been deliberately chosen, it seems possible that the practice may have been in origin a "virility" rite—that is to say, the object may have been to set up a mystical connection between the "paternal soul" (*ekiti*) and water.

The idea that water may represent a deliberate choice, for a magical purpose, seems to be strengthened by the observation that the Yorubas, whose culture resembles that of the Kwottos in many respects, wash the male body with water or rum (and similarly stain the female body red).[5] The idea here might well be that rum is "strong water," and is deliberately chosen with a view to obtaining a mystical result similar in kind, but more potent in degree, to that obtainable by the use of water. There may also be in this latter custom the intention of utilising for magical purposes (*i.e.* with a view to aiding

resurrection) a perceived mystical connection between the volatile character of rum and the volatile character of the "paternal" as distinct from the "maternal" soul. Whatever the detailed interpretation may be, it seems hardly likely that an expensive commodity like rum should be used as an alternative to costless water for washing important male corpses without a deliberate purpose.

Another example of bisexual soul-symbolism occurring in connection with the Kwotto funeral rites is, I suggest, to be found in the practice of wrapping the loins of a woman with a black cloth and of a man with a blue cloth. Black may symbolise underground darkness, and blue the water or sky, in the same way as in modern times the British Legion have put blue into their blue-and-gold flag "to remind us of those who fought on the sea, under the sea, or in the sky" (while the gold signifies "that all passed through fire").[6]

When I asked my native informants why this discrimination in the colour of the loin-cloth was shown between the sexes the answer was: "Man and woman are essentially different in life. It is, therefore, natural that they should be treated differently in death."

It is noteworthy in connection with the above theory that apparently identical bisexual soul-symbolism has been reported of the Yorubas and Igaras. On the one hand a Yoruba widow covers her head with a blue cloth when mourning for her husband[7]; while on the other, among the Yoruba-speaking Igara, the *Ashadu* (the principal Court official of the Igara Attah of Idah), when mourning for his "official wife" (the Attah), dons a black gown.[8] In both instances the symbolism has

been reported only of one sex. This, I assume, merely indicates that the observers failed to inquire what was the practice with regard to the other.

Lastly, there is the consideration that the Kwottos, like the Bakongo, credit their ancestors with some influence over the elements, in consequence of which they approach them with prayers in case of famine, drought, and other calamities believed to be due to them. These beliefs and practices among the Bakongo have been reported to be definitely correlated with the existence of a belief in the proximity of the homes of the dead to earth and water; and it would seem reasonable to suppose that the same beliefs and practices among the Kwottos may have a similar eschatological significance.

That some of the royal ancestors of the Kwottos, at least, are thought to reside under or near water would appear clear from the nature of the rain-making ritual practised in former days by the King of Panda. In time of drought, and also annually before the sowing and after the harvest, the chief used to offer sacrifices to a water-god named Age, with whom he interceded on behalf of his people and whom he addressed as "grandfather." His successor, the District Head of Umaisha, observed similar rites.

Only deceased chiefs, the High Priests of Ancestor Worship in the Spirit-world, are invoked to give the living rain in time of drought—a Herculean task, held to be beyond the power of commoners. The latter, being regarded, as it were, only as godlings, are asked in the graveside prayer to exercise the more modest and routine functions of helping to prosper the fruits of the earth and give fertility to women.

A further clear example of the association of the personality of the Kwotto, Igara, and Jukun kings with the proto-elements is to be found in the ritualistic regulation, still sanctioned by native opinion, by virtue of which, even at the present day, the Attah of Idah is supposed to touch water or earth only once in his life—namely, on the occasion of his formal installation. The original idea was, it would appear, to guard against the danger of his spiritual qualities escaping into these elements. On the conclusion of the installation ceremonies Mr Seton reports: "The Attah enters the Niger with bare feet (the only time his feet are supposed to touch the earth) and returns to the shore. This symbolises the fertilising of the land by the waters of the Niger during the 'Rains.' The Attah brings the water on his feet to the land." [9]

By such ritualistic observances are the traditional eschatological beliefs of the people made manifest, and reinforcement given to the view of the recurring cycle of human life as something mystically connected with the recurring action and reaction of the proto-elements, water and earth. Perhaps because felt to be a promising sign of the continuance of this relation in the Plan of Providence the Kwottos' neighbours, the Cow Fulani, like the Bakongo of Angola, revere the rainbow as a symbol of certain snake-spirits, associated with the continuance of the powers of procreation and fertility—an attitude which recalls Adam and Eve's puberty adventures with the talking serpent and the Promise of the Rainbow in Eden.

NOTES

[1] *Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, vol. ii., p. 107.

[2] *Op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 114.

[3] A. E. Torday, "Dualism in Western Bantu Religion and Social Organisation," in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. lviii., January-June 1928, p. 241.

[4] *Op. cit.*, pp. 241, 244.

[5] *Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, vol. ii., pp. 114, 115.

[6] Reported in *The Times*, 20th April 1929.

[7] *Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, vol. ii., p. 131.

[8] J. C. Moncton, "Burial Ceremonies of the Attah of Idah," in the *Journal of the African Society*, vol. xvii., No. CV., October 1927, p. 16.

[9] R. S. Seton, "The Installation of an Attah of Idah," in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. lviii., January-June 1928, p. 267.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Mourning & Resurrection Ceremonies

MOURNING is obligatory only on those relatives—namely, junior ones—on whom the duties of attending to the funeral, either by participation in the actual rites or by contributing to the expenses, devolves. Senior relatives do not wear mourning, in spite of the fact, as already noticed, that they are held by the Kwottos to be more broken-hearted than juniors at the death, and on that account are exempt from taking part in the funerary rites.

These regulations may at first sight appear to lend some colour to the theory advanced by some writers that the wearing of mourning among primitive peoples may have originated, primarily, not with the object of demonstrating grief, as we are apt to regard it, but as a magico-religious practice to ward off the effects of contamination with death. Thus Mr Meek states: "It is clear that these mourning rites [*i.e.* the mourning rites of Northern Nigerian pagan tribes in general and specifically including the Jukun and Igbira] have a double object—they are a public announcement of bereavement, and they disguise the mourners from the onslaught of evil spirits." [1]

I could not find that the idea of disguise from evil spirits enters into the purpose of the Kwotto procedure at the present day, the principal modern functions of which are apparently as follows.

As among us, the wearing of mourning serves, firstly —in addition to imparting a certain melancholy satisfaction to the wearer—as a means for the individual to show respect to the spirits of the dead by indicating by a visible sign that they have not been forgotten.

Secondly, as also among us, it indicates to the community that the wearer is observing the conventional sacred post-funeral ritual, and this knowledge enables others to adjust their social relations with the mourner in accordance with the conventional moral code. For example, among the Kwottos a man is reminded that the period during which custom forbids him to approach a woman is still in force while the signs of mourning are displayed by the widow.

The wearing of mourning only by junior relatives can be explained by reference to certain beliefs, bound up with seniority ideas, in connection with ancestor worship. Only those deceased ancestors who are senior to the living are considered to possess the power to help them on earth; and, accordingly, only senior deceased relatives are invoked by the living at the shrine of the household gods when supernatural aid is sought. Consequently, junior relatives have a material incentive, which seniors have not, for showing all possible respect to, and seeking to ingratiate themselves with, the spirit of the dead.

Further, if seniors were to show elaborate public deference to the memory of juniors, seniority ideas, which play an important part in preserving the solidarity of primitive communities, might suffer.

Psychological parallels to this state of affairs could, indeed, be adduced from modern Europe. For, even

in these democratic days, in England, it is not the usual practice for the king personally to attend the funeral of a non-royal subject, and in Spain he is forbidden by etiquette personally to attend the funeral even of a member of the royal family, even though, as on a recent occasion, she be an ex-queen regent and his own mother.

Among the Kwottos mourning is shown by junior relatives of the same generation as the deceased and by those of the generation below (*i.e.* sons, nephews, etc.) by the wearing of white strips of cloth wound round the breast and by the complete shaving of the head. Grandchildren wear mourning cloths, but do not shave the head.

A widow remains in mourning for her husband six months, the regulations governing the first three months being the strictest. The day her husband dies the widow shaves her head completely, and keeps it shaved for three months, when she starts to let her hair grow again. During the whole of the mourning period she wears only old dirty and ragged clothes and a loin-cloth, inside which she wears a certain sort of leaves. The leaves would appear either to have some sexual symbolic significance or perhaps to be a sanitary precaution, rendered necessary on account of the prohibition to wear a clean loin-cloth.

For the first three months she is not permitted to leave her hut, except for the purpose of relieving nature. When walking abroad in public places during the latter three months, in addition to wearing the mourning garb, the mourner places the right hand on the left shoulder, or vice versa, as an additional indication of her state.

On the completion of the mourning period the woman is free to remarry and live with her new husband, who will usually be a younger brother of her deceased husband or one of her deceased husband's sisters' sons, in accordance with the Kwotto customs in regard to the inheritance of widows.

On the conclusion of the period of mourning, or at some other convenient time after interment, a funeral feast is held, at which a formal farewell is bade to the deceased by all relatives and friends. Until the holding of this funeral feast the ghost of the dead man is regarded as earth-bound. Such it is believed to remain until the final rites of apotheosis are completed, and it is set free by a series of subsequent ritual acts to join its confrères in the spiritual world.

The scale on which the celebrations which constitute the final mortuary rites are held differs widely in accordance with the social status of the deceased and the influence or wealth of the relatives. A man of importance in a family is regarded as meriting a more elaborate display than a less important member of the same family. For the idea of the equality of mankind in death is, of course, quite a foreign one to people who believe that spiritual power manifested during the sojourn on earth still accrues to the disembodied soul after death. The criterion of importance is the possession either of worldly power or riches, or of sufficient vitality to have lived to an old age or to have begotten many children.

Where the surviving relatives of the deceased are so poor as to be unable to afford any public celebration they will content themselves with providing food and

drink to the extent of their means, to give in honour of the dead to those coming to commiserate with them on their bereavement. It is not unusual, however, for a poor family which afterwards acquires substance to hold formal celebrations to honour those who had died without these being held. For it is explained that a dead man's ghost would feel slighted if his descendants, who could afford a funeral feast, did not provide him with one, and he might be led to cause them misfortune out of spite. In such circumstances the longest deceased important relative who was in this predicament would usually be honoured first, the more recently dead ancestors having to wait their turn. Thus a man may be honoured by a formal funeral feast from within a short time to many years after his death.

The procedure in connection with a funeral feast is as follows. The relatives of the deceased, and their wives' and husbands' relatives, and all their friends, are invited. The feasting, which takes place either within the precincts of the household or in an open space, is preceded by a sacrifice offered to the deceased at his grave. Dancing is kept up for seven days or less out of regard for a commoner, or more in deference to persons of rank. The guests are provided with tasty food, usually including fish and yams mashed up and mixed with palm-oil, and beer in abundance. In addition the friends are presented with presents at the conclusion of the feast, in honour of the dead and to compensate them for their trouble in coming. The cost of these presents is defrayed by junior relatives in varying proportion, according to the degree of their relationship.

These celebrations are carried out only once for each

deceased person. Anniversaries are celebrated by offering sacrifices at the grave of the deceased.

The Kwotto funeral dances, which I have seen, resemble no European function so much as a fancy-dress ball, for at them maskers, known as "Dodos," appear, covered from head to foot, including the face, in tight-fitting knitted costumes of bright colours. There are various types of costumes, some of which are associated with special types of dances. Thus there are warrior costumes, which are worn together with weapons, and old-men costumes with imitation beards; young-women costumes, with padded-cloth breasts, which are worn together with valuable necklaces and women's ornaments, and a woman's girdle (*jigida*) worn outside; women-with-infant costumes, with imitation children strapped on to the back of the dancer; old-women costumes, with white bird feathers to represent an old woman's hair, and numerous others. Anklets consisting of strings of Azonki berries, cowries or bells are attached to the masker's costume, so that a clattering noise is made as the dancer strides along. Ornamental staves are carried in the absence of weapons.

The maskers usually make their own costumes. They represent the ghosts of the departed—hence the complete covering of the face and body—and the ghost of the deceased ancestor in whose honour the dances are held is regarded as being present at the rites.

The young are told that the Dodos actually are the departed, and it is said that even grown women often believe this to be literally true.

The Dodos appear only on the occasion of funeral dances, but as custom demands the putting off of

funeral celebrations which fall due during the farming season until after the harvest, and approves the holding of such celebrations at times of public rejoicing—such as the pre-sowing and post-harvest celebrations—it will be seen why the Dodos are very continually in evidence during the period between the harvesting of the crops and the sowing of the new grain. For the same reasons Dodos may often appear on the occasion of various seasonal ceremonies, but the Dodo dances are not an integral part of those ceremonies.

A considerable variety of dances are performed on these occasions. They are, for the most part, each associated with their peculiar drums and other musical instruments. Among those which I have seen are the Agange dance, characterised by hopping and jumping; the Yeriye dance, the feature of which is circular stepping; and the Gere dance, performed by a masker on stilts.

Women may be present at, but may not take part in, Dodo dances. They put on their best clothes and perform their own dances, however, side by side with the Dodos.

Often much beer is consumed at these celebrations, and the din of the drumming and shouting can be heard for miles around.

In the same way as the noise made on the announcement of death, the object of making as much noise as possible at farewell funeral feasts has been explained by some writers as possibly having originally been connected with the idea of driving or frightening away death. Thus Mr Meek says: "Dancing and music are a regular accompaniment [*i.e.* of pagan funeral feasts

in Northern Nigeria], with the intention, no doubt, of driving away death." [2]

There appears to be no such conscious intention on the part of the Kwottos at the present day. The modern social value of the procedure seems to be as follows.

Firstly, the drumming, like the beating of gongs on the announcement of death, serves to attract attention. Further, it functions as a harmonising force tending to socialise the individual feelings and actions of those present, and thus produce a maximum unity and concord of the community.

Secondly, the disguising of the head and body serves to conceal the identity of the dancers, who represent the ghosts of the departed, from women and children, who are not supposed to have guessed the secret. There seems no reason to assume that such deception of the women and children is necessarily primarily intended as a means of terrorisation. There is also, no doubt, present the motive of creating a joyous romantic illusion in the minds of those deceived and thus imparting to them a certain emotional satisfaction.

Viewed from this angle the custom is psychologically analogous to our own practice of disguising a person to represent a departed saint at Christmas time and encouraging the belief among children that the masker is really, as distinct from merely theatrically, Santa Claus, come down from his heavenly home to perform good works among the living; and by such material manifestation reassure them in their belief in the reality of the communion between the departed and those on earth, which forms the basis equally of the Kwotto

intercessory prayers addressed to apotheosised ancestors as of the Catholic Christian invocation of the saints.

Thirdly, it would appear, from the statements of my native informants, that the Dodo dances are performed at the present day more with the simple intention of showing honour to the dead—who are regarded, though invisible, as interested spectators—than with any ulterior magical purpose. There is great competition to possess the finest and most elaborate costume and to become the master of the most difficult steps for displaying on these occasions, which provide one of the opportunities par excellence in the year for the "peacock" in the savage to express himself.

Except, perhaps, on the part of the close relatives of the deceased, the prevailing emotion during the period of these celebrations appears to be one of joyfulness and pleasure.

To sum up, I incline to the view that the intention of the dancing and merry-making, far from being designed to drive away evil spirits, is essentially similar to that underlying the "funeral games" of the ancestor-worshipping Japanese, as explained by Mr W. Weston, formerly British Chaplain at Yokohama.

He states as follows in a note dealing with the Japanese "Shokonsha" shrine ceremonies, held bi-annually in commemoration of "the souls of all Japanese soldiers of the reign of the late Emperor Meiji":

"A very interesting feature of the occasion is the 'funeral games'—as one may term them—reminiscent of those spoken of in Virgil's *Æneid*; for in popular estimation it is perhaps hardly the 'religious' rites which have the chief place. Wrestling, jiu-jitsu, fencing,

etc., together with various forms of entertainment, all play their part. For the root idea is the feeling that the 'great cloud of witnesses' commemorated are, though invisible, interested spectators who can feel approval and pleasure in the skill and agility as well as in the rejoicings of those prepared to follow them in the service of their sovereign and their home." [3]

As a result of the ritual acts performed on the occasion of the Kwotto resurrection ceremonies it is believed that the ghost of the deceased is finally freed from its earthly trammels and enabled to enter the spiritual world as an independent entity. Thereafter the deceased ancestor is conceived of as endowed with power to look after the interests of his descendants on earth and act as an intermediary between them and the other spiritual powers.

According to popular belief the resurrected one, after thus bidding farewell to his relatives on earth at the communion feast held to speed his departure, then straightway rejoins his kindred in the spiritual world. Thence he maintains contact with earth by means of ghostly manifestations in an analogous manner to that in which, according to Catholic belief, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity after Resurrection is believed still to manifest Himself to Christians in the guise of the Third, while the First—corresponding in the Kwotto analogy to the ancestor of whom the deceased was an incarnation—as the Spiritual Source of Both, is conceived at the same time in different aspects and for different purposes as distinct from and the same as Each. In addition to revealing himself thus, it is believed that in the fullness of time the resurrected ancestor

will leave the abode of his fathers and return to earth, to be born again of woman as a son of man, later once more after resurrection returning to a mystical union whence he came.

Aided by such general psychological beliefs the Kwottos are enabled to find a happy ending to the story of life, and a working interpretation of the mysteries of birth and death. By such a faith the old find consolation in the hope of resurrection and reincarnation, while the young, in so far as they give such matters heed, may hope to prove worthy followers of their ancestors, and to bequeath in their turn a legacy to posterity.

NOTES

[1] *Northern Tribes of Nigeria*, vol. ii., p. 131.

[2] *Op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 128.

[3] W. Weston, in a letter to *The Times*, 8th May 1929.

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